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On the death of cities

WILLIAM C. BAER

It is often remarked that American culture attempts to repudiate old age and to deny natural death. As Herman Feifel has said, "In a society that emphasizes the future, the prospect of no future at all is an abomination. Hence dying and death invite our hostility, repudiation, and denial, and assume taboo status." This repudiation of natural death occurs in the urban realm as well as in personal life. There is a refusal to admit that older cities or neighborhoods can die: They may be "sick" or "deteriorating," but the belief is nevertheless held by expert and politician alike that with proper treatment these areas will recover to survive forever. Even such authorities as George Sternlieb and Norton Long, neither noted for urban optimism, stopped short of the ultimate answer to the question "Is the inner city doomed?" raised in this journal a few years ago (Number 25, Fall 1971). Sternlieb foresaw the function of the inner city as approximating that of a child's sandbox, while Long suggested the additional function of "Indian" reservation for the poor, the deviant, and the unwanted. But neither saw fit to dismiss, or even discuss, the following phase—the city as cemetery.

It is time to explore this idea. The rapid growth of American urban society has meant that we have been present at many more

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urban births than deaths. While we have wonderfully accommodated ourselves to this growth and development, we have not yet had to face or reconcile ourselves to a proportionate number of demises. But, henceforth, death may increasingly take its fair share of parts of our older cities.

Except for our historical ghost towns, the nation has not yet received reports of urban demise. Indeed, such cities as San Diego, Phoenix, Dallas, and Atlanta are enjoying an exuberant good health. But all is not well with every city. There are now abundant accounts of large-scale housing abandonment and urban deterioration in parts of many of our older cities. The poor health of certain areas of Newark, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and St. Louis in the East and Midwest, and the impending poor health of Watts and suburban areas of Pomona and San Jose in the West suggest the magnitude of the problem and the extent of its spread. In general, the decaying areas in these and other communities are characterized by poor quality housing, low-income residents, relatively low property values, high occupancy turnovers, accelerated vacancy rates, and extreme vandalism and housing abandonment. One cannot help suspecting that in some cases the deterioration is terminal.

The causes of such deterioration are numerous. There is the obvious reason of sheer physical decline owing to old age and the deterioration and obsolescence of housing and community facilities; the equally obvious reason of "white flight" from integration; the less obvious reason of financial disinvestment through deferred maintenance expenditures (i.e., the negative cash flows to landlords who would like to sell but can find no buyer, and the withholding of loans by lenders through the "red-lining" of certain neighborhoods); and finally, the not so well recognized reason of increased personal incomes resulting in increased accessibility to outlying areas, which changes residential preferences over time. All of these induce and provoke the growth of some neighborhoods and the concomitant decline in others.

The purposes of this essay are to contemplate the various aspects of urban death and to suggest what may be done to ameliorate its consequences. Contemplation is meant to be just that: a considered exposition that treats urban death as very much in the natural order of things, to be taken in stride—not an apocalyptic pronouncement in the currently fashionable vein. What may appear to be an excessive preoccupation with the topic of urban death really only reflects its usual absence in discussions of urban mat-

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ters, so that moderate attention appears immoderate by comparison.

The aspects of urban death are diverse. There is the historical precedent of frontier agricultural development and decline apparently repeated in our urban development. There is the present-day struggle—silent although national in scope, desperate although largely unarticulated—over who will pay the urban funeral costs, for they will be massive. There is the shaman-like presence of urban experts who employ anthropomorphic reasoning in their proffered cures but anomalously stop short of including death in their models. There are the incantations of "conservation" and "preservation" in the face of inevitable old age, and the societal rituals acted out through HUD to provide succor to the bereaved.

In suggesting what may be done to ameliorate the consequences of urban demise, this essay will deal more with symptoms than causes. Given our relative ignorance about urban phenomena, policies dealing with symptoms are often more realistic than those based upon hypothetical causes. Moreover, responding to root causes may excessively tax our willingness to make the necessary sacrifices, even were these causes known. The policies to be discussed, therefore, are simple; they merely attempt to accomodate society to an inevitable event rather than pretend to avert it.

Finally, the purpose of this essay is not to prescribe policy. It is aimed at pre-policy thinking—at the values and attitudes we hold before thinking about specific policies. It deliberately eschews a massing of facts and marshalling of arguments, for it is not intended to prove or demonstrate anything. Rather, it uses conjecture and exploration to stimulate new thought. The fundamental nature of death yields best to this kind of treatment.

Premises and processes of growth

For some, the news of impending urban expiration need not be cause for alarm. B. F. Skinner, for instance, questions whether it is necessary for cities to survive, and has suggested that the skeletons of cities that remain in the future may be "like the bones of dinosaurs in museums." Noting that abandoned areas in our urban cores already constitute parts of ghost towns, Skinner has suggested that in an age of advanced communication, networks of towns may supplant today's large cities, which are increasingly ungovernable. But the good health of many of our cities suggests that Skinner's view beholds a reality that will not come to pass in the

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foreseeable future. Instead, the immediate reality is a nation that simultaneously encompasses good as well as poor urban health, the regeneration of some older city sectors and the atrophy of others, community birth in some parts of the nation and community death in other parts.

Another comment on urban demise comes from George Sternlieb, who reports that the city of Vienna is dying, but doing so gracefully. The reasons, he says, lie in the manner in which Vienna was built and in the lack of competition from nearby urban areas. But this account merely shows that the context in which death visits and the duration of death's approach are significant factors in how we view the process and its inevitable results. A slow death with dignity after a long and fruitful life, as perhaps may be the case with Vienna, is cause for sorrow but need not be cause for dismay. It can be comprehended, albeit regretfully, as a stage of our total existence. But a more rapid deterioration in what only a short time before appeared to be a robust existence causes initial disbelief and subsequent consternation. This best describes the fate of many American cities.

The key to the difference between the two kinds of urban death may lie in the manner in which our cities were built, and in national attitudes towards growth and development. Slow and considered growth may lead to slow but graceful death; rapid and competitive growth may lead to a harsher and more abrupt demise. There are remarkable similarities between the early practices of agricultural development in this nation and American urban growth and development. Indeed, the former may have set the tone and precedent for the latter. Since shortly after colonial times, Americans developed and dispensed with their agricultural land in much the same fashion as they now develop and discard their urban land. The early settlers moved to virgin land, cleared it, plowed it, and planted it. When the earth was exhausted of sufficient nutrients, they moved on. In the South, where crops like cotton quickly depleted the soil, the availability of new land to the West particularly encouraged this practice. In other cases, the early settlers moved West when they felt threatened by the presence of other people and impending civilization, rudimentary though it may have been on the frontier. Here the sound of another's ax was a sufficient signal to move farther West.

There are parallels to both experiences in urban and suburban development. The quick rise of tenements to house the immigrants and the subsequent construction of low-cost suburban tracts to

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accomodate a rapidly growing native population resulted in neighborhood development with a relatively rapid life cycle. The early depletion of neighborhood vitality and the promise of new suburban development on the periphery where life could be begun anew attracted many from the older neighborhoods. Like the promise of cheap agricultural land through the federal Homestead Acts, the federal inducement to potential suburban homeowners through FHA, VA, and home-owner income-tax-deduction assistance and through highway construction encouraged this movement to new areas. And many times a face of a different color was a sufficient signal to the inhabitants to move out to the peripheral suburban ring.

So long as there was fresh land yet to be cultivated, the frontier people could be careless with their agricultural practices, since mistakes of tilling and crop rotation could be left behind for others to cope with. So long as there were new exurban developments, mistakes in the planning and developing of cities could be left behind for others to endure.

But as we sow, so shall we reap. The problem of depleted and eroded soil confronted later farmers, and the problem of too quickly maturing and dying neighborhoods now confronts the residual urban dweller and urban expert alike.

The costs of urban death

The life of the physical plant in our urban areas is a function of the original investment and the level of maintenance needed to keep it intact. A few years ago, a Senate study estimated the public investment in central cities alone to be about $87 billion. It has sometimes been estimated that the ratio of public to private investment in central cities is one to 1.3. If so, a total of about $200 billion is invested in these areas. Sternlieb and Hughes, however, report some disturbing trends in the income of the families and individuals living in the central cities. Between 1970 and 1973, the aggregate income of families and unrelated individuals moving *out* of the central cities was about $55 billion, while the income of those moving *in* was only about $26 billion. Clearly, changes of this magnitude in the incomes of the central-city inhabitants in such a short time are not a healthy sign. The capacity to support previous levels of commercial activity is diminished by the lower level of disposable income. Investors will shift their expenditures in commercial activities to follow the migration flows of

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middle-income and upper-income groups. The ability of lower-income groups to maintain the local tax base is dubious. Central-city efforts to sustain current levels of public services have to be reduced at the very time that the inhabitants most require those services.

There is no question that the costs of urban demise will be met. They cannot be avoided. But there is substantial question as to who will foot the bill. That is why there are so many words spoken about saving the urban core, but so few dollars spent. It is all very well to talk in grandiose (yet abstract) terms about how society pays for urban death, but in reality some of us will pay more for it than others. The major urban issue facing our nation in the next decade is not the cost of the dying sectors of our cities, but the incidence and the timing. The choice of whether the costs will be borne publicly or privately—and if publicly, by which level of government—has marked effects on which groups in society shoulder most of the costs.

In the past, before urban death was really a problem, we resorted to *federal* urban-renewal programs to solve *local* deterioration problems. Public funds were raised by the federal government (largely through the income tax) to help private property owners (largely downtown business interests) forestall or recoup their real-estate losses, in order to achieve the larger purpose of sustaining our urban centers. In retrospect, it has become clear that the greatest costs from this program were borne by the "relocatees" of the urban renewal projects and the greatest benefits were enjoyed by the property owners and developers of these projects. The middle class has borne much of the financial costs, yet has seen few tangible benefits from these undertakings—they live and shop in suburbia, and are relatively indifferent to the health of the inner city.

There is an opposite strategy, however, and this is unconsciously the tack being taken today. Through private action and public inaction, many of the costs of deteriorating central cities can be assigned to specific members of society, without the whole of society having to shoulder a proportionate burden. The secret is to keep payment of these costs out of the public sector, or, failing that, to confine them to as low a level of government as possible. The private action is the out-migration by middle-income and upper-income groups from the central city. Those with the most to contribute in income and property taxes are electing to move away from the central city, and so far they have been unwilling

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to elect public officials who will make them move their tax dollars back.

If the public were largely agreed that a concerted effort to forestall the impending demise of our urban centers were required, Congress and the Administration would prepare a massive, expensive, renewal-like program to match this consensus. As noted earlier, the monies would no doubt come from the income tax; hence, regardless of where they lived, taxpayers would bear these costs in proportion to their particular income and tax rate. In addition, each taxpayer would shoulder further costs, varying with the state and local tax structures, the degree of federal assistance, the presence of older urban areas in his state and community, and his real-estate equity in or adjacent to blighted areas.

But if there is no outcry to save the dying urban cores, if Congress and the Administration reflect the public will by supplying only token or symbolic aid, the composition of the group that must bear the costs of urban death will also change. The burden of the costs then remains in the private sector. Without federal aid, the equity owners and mortgage holders of property in these areas will bear most of the costs, as will the owners of insurance companies facing excessive numbers of claims for property damage by fire. Although the public sector may still remain involved through lower levels of government (particularly local governments who cannot ignore the effects of urban deterioration), the tax base to pay for these costs will shift from income to wealth, from salaries and wages to real property, owing to the extreme dependence of local governments on the property tax.

These shifts imply others—for instance, the order in which the costs are incurred. If there is no public assistance, the losses from deteriorating properties will first hit equity owners who abandon their properties, and then move to mortgage holders who must foreclose on these properties. As the foreclosed properties remain unsold, they will be vandalized and burned, shifting some of the cost to insurance companies settling claims for casualty losses. Eventually the public sector, through local government, will assume responsibility for the properties. These costs will ultimately be felt in increased local property and sales taxes, to compensate for a reduced tax base. Citizens in the suburban rings can afford largely to ignore this process, for the repercussions will have to filter through property owners, and through the local governments whose corporate limits encompass the areas in question, before the financial impacts will directly intrude upon the suburban ring.

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At a minimum, delays in the effects of the cost are achieved for non-urban-core dwellers by this maneuver, and there is always the chance that they will be able to escape much of the long-run cost as well.

Urban illness and medical reasoning

When it comes to urban illnesses, the experts adopt a peculiar stance: They resort to an anthropomorphic model, yet fail to include death among the possible outcomes. Urban experts have modeled their prescriptions, consciously or unconsciously, after those of the medical profession. Thus, just as functional disorders of the kidneys, eyes, heart, etc., may be remedied through organ transplants, houses and neighborhoods are subjected to rehabilitation and remodeling, where life-support systems (e.g., kitchens, bathrooms, electrical and plumbing systems, streets, water and sewer systems, etc.) are all regenerated to forestall old age. If old age is already upon people, various forms of plastic surgery are employed to erase the signs of the erosions of time. In a neighborhood, "clean-up, fix-up, paint-up" campaigns are recommended to disguise deterioration and present a more attractive exterior.

Sometimes physicians prescribe radical surgery to remove a cancerous growth or a gangrenous limb. Similarly, urban planners sometimes recommend eradication of dilapidated or substandard buildings in a neighborhood to prevent the spread of "blight" throughout the community. And just as transfusions are sometimes required for replenishing one's life blood, so also are infusions of mortgage and development money seen as necessary for restoring economic vitality to financially depleted communities.

Never before did the urban doctors have such a battery of diagnostic tests and prescriptions as they do today. For years, discussion of housing and neighborhood-renewal programs was confined to the arcane language of federal legislative title and section numbers—Title I, Sec. 221 (d) (3), 235 and 236 housing, etc. These programs, while well intentioned, frequently did not work well in practice. Uniform federal regulations, when applied to the variety of local circumstances, became a Procrustean bed. All this is now changing. The federal government, with the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act, has devolved program formulation to lower governmental levels while still supplying the funds. In addition, state and local governments now provide their own assistance and program continuity in terms of tenant and home-

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owner counseling, revised landlord-tenant laws, housing appeals boards, code revisions, housing information services, etc., as well as locally generated financial assistance.

Nevertheless, the apparent variety of programs may be misleading. For all their diversity, they do not acknowledge the prospect of terminal illness. We should not be surprised by professional reluctance to admit this possibility.

First, it can be argued, these new prescriptions have not been sufficiently tested; their very presence provides new hope that terminal illnesses can be avoided.

Second, and perhaps more important, there are basic human reasons why mention of death is avoided. Like doctors, urban experts are trained to heal and remedy—and moreover, to develop anew. Actions aimed at curing the problem are good for personal esteem: Emotional (and financial) rewards are derived from the curative powers experts purport to possess. When efforts to delay death fail, the urban experts, like the medical experts, may lose interest and transfer their energies and resources elsewhere.

Third, and this pertains as much to politicians as to experts, activity of almost any kind at least wards off feelings of helplessness. Furthermore, it provides an aura or style to the process, which may ward off future blame. After all, we are more ready to forgive one who, in retrospect, is suspected of having done everything (even too much) than the person who is accused of having done too little.

Fourth, unlike doctors, urban planners and others have no intrinsic evidence that their patients must die. Urban death is seen as accidental, not compulsory. There would always appear the hope that life can be maintained—for a little while longer in any event.

We face a paradox: The signs of impending neighborhood death are all around us, nearer than ever before. But now diagnoses and prescriptions abound as never before, so that politicians and urban professionals alike can minister to the patient with these supposed cures, disguising from themselves and others exactly what is taking place behind a screen of programs. One increasingly suspects, however, that the screen will in time become a shroud.

Museums or mausoleums?

The above may sound like the opening speech at the first annual conference of urban morticians. Surely, one would hope,

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things need not be this gloomy. After all, urban experts point out, there are ever increasing efforts at revitalizing parts of our older cities. Historic preservation, conversion of warehouses to fashionable commercial or bohemian-residential districts, and rehabilitation of older neighborhoods by the middle class in search of housing bargains are all cases in point. More basically, it has been argued, the whole environmental movement and the so-called energy crisis are slowing down new developments on the urban fringe, thereby backing up the migration trend into the urban core once again. There are also the new community development programs funded by HUD, which should provide some badly needed assistance. Finally, it has been said that we cannot afford to write off the capital investment in our urban cores in a now capital-short economy.

Many of these arguments may only be deathbed conversations, designed to distract both the dying and bereaved. It is true that historic preservation is more popular than ever. The National Registrar of Historic Places listed only 3,500 properties in 1972; it lists over 10,000 today. Where once only single properties were listed, the Registrar now shows more than 1,000 districts, including urban districts like Wooster Square in New Haven and even towns like Sisterdale, Texas. No longer are the properties of America's historical elite alone identified as being worthy of preservation; working-class neighborhoods like the Milwaukee Avenue Historic District in Minneapolis are now as eligible as Beacon Hill for aid under the National Historic Preservation Act.

One can applaud the breadth and egalitarianism now pervading historical preservation efforts—but how far can such efforts go? Watts, after all, is the birthplace of the urban riots that brought about the concentrated urban programs of the latter half of the 1960's and early 1970's, and their subsequent denouement of failure—a critical turning point in American urban history. But Watts has not yet been singled out for historic preservation. Indeed, Watts has preserved its historical character for the Bicentennial solely by dint of its inability to receive effective aid. Despite the sound and fury of the federal programs, they have signified nothing; Watts remains largely as it was before the riots. Deterioration, disinvestment, and abandonment are still there for all to see, and they will remain, without need to expend historical preservation funds.

Such areas are to be seen all around the nation. We can preserve their "as is" condition too, easily enough, by not spending any

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money. The point is that historic preservation, and preservation undertaken for profit by the private sector, are highly selective in their choice of projects. Their efforts only "save" or preserve areas in the central cities for thousands of people, when the magnitude of the exodus from—and the internal movement within—the central city is measured in the hundreds of thousands. Furthermore, rehabilitation and conservation are expensive. Views to the contrary are based on the rehabilitation of yesterday's buildings with yesterday's material cost, labor paid at yesterday's salaries and wages, and money borrowed at yesterday's interest rates. In reality, developers today must pay today's costs for conservation and meet today's building code and administrative red tape as well. The result is a finished product at best not much cheaper than a new one—all too frequently, a building with a shorter economic life, and in a somewhat deteriorated or obsolete area of the city.

Historic preservation meets selective historic and symbolic needs; conservation and rehabilitation meet selective needs of some middle-income and upper-income households. Neither can meet the mass needs occasioned by poverty, deterioration, and decay.

As to a slowing down of deterioration and decay in the inner city because the suburbs are no longer developing rapidly and thereby draining off central-city vitality, that is probably a mirage. No-growth and slow-growth policies, whether stemming from rational calculations concerning the detrimental effects of urban development on the environment, or owing to cycles in national economic development beyond anyone's comprehension, nevertheless mean unemployment, reduced income, and ultimately deferred maintenance and deterioration for certain parts of the community. Whatever pressures there are for renewed investment in urban "grey areas" because of population pressures "backing up" from slow peripheral urban development may be offset in large part by the depressed economy of central-city dwellers who are unable to afford such "reclaimed" areas. Furthermore, it appears likely that there will still be considerable pressures from the poor and working class to escape the slums. We could well see a trend not experienced since the 1930's—substantial doubling up of households in the face of large vacancy rates. But this time the doubling up would occur in parts of suburbia and the outer fringes of the central city, while abandonment would continue in the central city. Thus, some urban death would continue unabated, despite a decline in new housing starts, and a lowering of overall vacancy rates.

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New HUD programs: help or hindrance?

The activity surrounding the HUD community development grants is cause for continuing depression: There is little money available—there never will be enough money available—to correspond to the scale of the perceived problems and the aspirations of the planners; and basic legislative/administrative lessons remain unlearned after 25 years of experience, so that what monies are available are needlessly wasted in the futile pursuit of idealized excellence.

The money problem is now widely recognized. Whereas the magnitude of the urban housing problem alone has been variously estimated to require between $5 billion annually (according to Henry Aaron and the Urban Institute) and $34 billion annually (a housing allowance to all households below the median income à la Herbert Gans), current appropriations for community development funds are less than $3 billion annually. There is little prospect that this amount will be increased above normal adjustments for inflation.

The legislative/administrative problem and its repercussions are not yet acknowledged. But they are important. Congress, no matter which party is in control, and the administration, no matter what party the President, have an apparently insatiable need continually to revamp HUD programs. Redevelopment, urban renewal, 221 (d) (3), community renewal, public housing, 235, 236, block grants, section 8, the myriad of other programs that have had to be mastered and then forgotten over the years have guaranteed failure, even if the program was intrinsically a good one. Uncertainty and change have siphoned off political and bureaucratic energies that could have been better spent on improving any one of the programs over time.

No sooner do the technicians and bureaucrats (at both HUD and the local level) master the routine and procedures for filling out forms, meeting requirements, processing paperwork, and eventually releasing funds, than the programs are changed, necessitating new regulations and administrative procedures at the federal level and their mastery at the local level. No sooner have the local planners explained the federal requirements to local politicians and citizen groups, winning their understanding and support, than the rules and formulations are altered, eroding the local confidence and enthusiasm so necessary to overcome program obstacles. No sooner have local political forces fought and bargained to reach some accommodation over the federally mandated participation require-

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ments and the subsequent divvying up of funds, than the federal requirements change, setting in motion a new round of local political infighting and subsequent delay in getting things built and money disbursed.

The considerable effort spent coping with uncertainty and change affects program effectiveness and accomplishment. The problems of implementing HUD urban-assistance programs are inevitably so great (because of the necessary legislative appeasement of assorted national interests) that, in the end, programs that are merely adequate conceptually but lend themselves to being well-run administratively are often superior to theoretically excellent programs that are poorly executed because of administrative difficulties. The constant search for improved programs is in practice inherently self-defeating—it is a contradiction in terms. Continual change forecloses administrative excellence; it forbids the possibility of a learning curve.

Thus HUD programs do not even make effective use of what few resources they provide. The changing nature of the programs keeps all those involved so fully occupied in mastering the changing remedies that there is no time to observe, or at least reflect upon and evaluate, the true condition of the patient or the effects of the remedies.

Triage and euthanasia

Granted the above, where does it take us? What can be learned? The answers seem to flow quite naturally by continuing the mode of reasoning. They are not specific answers, but only general policy directions.

First, there is the issue of triage. The term means a "sifting," and refers to the unpleasant but inevitable assigning of priorities for treatment among casualties from battle or natural catastrophe so as to put available aid to best use. Typically, triage takes the form of a tripartite division of the victims: those who will survive only if provided with immediate aid; those who will most likely die in any event; and those who will most likely live in any event. The first group receives the bulk of the assistance, the other two receive only enough help to alleviate their worst suffering. Thus there is always a race in time between the exhaustion of resources and the expiration of the wounded, some of whom might have been saved if efforts had not been mistakenly applied to those beyond hope and those not in need of help.

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The direct application of triage to sectors of the city has been best articulated by Anthony Downs. He suggests that neighborhoods in need of attention be separated into three groups. The healthiest would receive only token aid—tree plantings, for instance, which are highly visible but do not cost much. The worst would receive a sizeable portion of community funds, but much of this would be devoted to burial services—e.g., demolition of abandoned housing, elimination of public health menaces, etc. The largest portion of community funds under Downs' scheme would be devoted to those neighborhoods just beginning to show the signs of decline. Here assistance would achieve the greatest effect, being neither wasted on neighborhoods too far gone to be helped, nor devoted to neighborhoods that can in part look to their own resources for sustenance.

Local officials in many cities are sympathetic to the triage-like approach. Twenty years of chasing slums around the city have demonstrated to urban renewal specialists the futility of devoting all of its resources to its most blighted areas. In the past, either large investments were sunk into a deteriorated area with scarcely any lasting effects, or its former function was entirely destroyed in the effort to "save" the area. This dilemma has resulted in the pragmatic reconsideration, expressed *sotto voce:* "Don't treat the worst first!" The ramifications of the policy (What happens to those untreated areas? Which areas do you treat instead? In what order?) are not carefully spelled out, no doubt for political reasons.

The allocation of resources in our society is a political act, and triage is a very deliberate policy of allocating resources. Purposely to withhold resources from some groups clearly in need of help, while providing for others who are clearly in less need, quickly stirs political conflict. No matter what a long-term, objective rationality might suggest for sick and dying neighborhoods, the immediate political reality tends to rule out overt acts of triage as a heartless policy. Triage is simply not a strategy that can be openly espoused in a political setting.

While the connotation of triage is politically unacceptable, this does not mean that the issue simply goes away. Acts of triage are already taking place. Financial ill health has forced cities across the United States to rid themselves of their least essential functions and cut back severely on more basic services so that the civic corpus might be saved. Decisions are thus being made that treat certain public functions as expendable, others not. The focus of triage in these cases is on paring away the least efficient services—

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they may be healthy (so long as funds are provided) but their continuance is not healthy for the community because of their inefficient use of scarce funds.

Sifting and sorting of neighborhoods also goes on when there is insufficient aid to treat all. A triage-like allocation occurs when some vocal neighborhood groups demand and receive aid while less well-organized areas in similar straits receive none. This is politically acceptable because the underlying premise of the allocation has shifted. Long-term objective calculations—made by policy analysts—of marginal rates of return on investments in different neighborhoods are replaced by short-term political calculations by elected officials showing visible compassion. The ultimate result may be similar to an "inefficient" practice of triage. Resources are devoted to neighborhoods at all three levels: the worst neighborhoods, where aid will do little long-term good but will act as a palliative; those neighborhoods that need aid but have it within their own resources to provide it; and those neighborhoods that both need public assistance and can put it to good use. This may not be the optimum use of aid in a technical sense, but it is a strategy at least superior to that of single-mindedly assisting the worst first. Furthermore, "inefficient" triage may even accomplish neighborhood euthanasia, at least in some instances. I do not mean "mercy killings," but rather what is literally meant by the term: a painless death.

"Ethical inefficiency"

In all of this the political system can do what it does best. It can seem to be compassionate while being moderately efficient. Politicians can allow the practice of triage without having to confront it.

The issue is similar to the dilemma of health-care programs. The rational use of limited resources in providing health care for the nation involves benefit-cost calculations that are morally outrageous to many. Politics demands full health care for all, while the available resources show this to be impossible. The solution appears to be what D. Neuhauser and A. M. Lewicki call "ethical inefficiency." Resources are allocated with some attempt at cost-effectiveness, but the "slippage" or "slack" in the system holds out hope of care even to those whose case could never meet the merciless strictures of a benefit-cost test.

But what assurances do we have that a triage-like policy toward

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neighborhoods would be practiced with sufficient "inefficiency" to ensure mercy as well as the reasonable use of resources? Any effort even suggestive of triage must ascertain if death is imminent or has already occurred to avoid futile efforts at retrieval. Correct diagnosis is not always easy even for physicians. The parts of the human system do not all expire simultaneously. The brain may be incapacitated while the heart and lungs still function. To be sure, cessation of one soon brings on the demise of others; but with the aid of technology, the heart, lungs, and brain can be made to function past the time nature originally intended, and, with skill and luck, can at times be restored to normal operation. Sometimes, an external stimulus like an electric shock can revive an expired organ.

The complexity of determining the exact point when death occurs has increasingly vexed the medical profession. There are now several concepts of death, depending upon the circumstances; we may speak of medical, biological, theological, and legal death, each with different implications. Indeed, science now reveals that the exact point of death may be better expressed in probabilities than in absolutes.

Clearly, the same problems arise with pronouncing the moment of neighborhood death. The variety of support systems can expire at quite different times. Theological death—the departing of the soul (or departure of social vitality)—may occur long before other kinds of expiration. But other support systems may soon follow. Repair men may refuse to enter some neighborhoods for fear of being mugged or shot, thereby terminating vital services. In such neighborhoods even municipal supports like utilities and fire and police protection may be offered only sporadically, or when refusal jeopardizes the surrounding communities as well. The legal obligation to provide support may linger long after the death of the administrative will to do so. Such shocks to the system as urban renewal, concentrated code enforcement, or doubled neighborhood police patrols may better serve in many instances as tests to settle the question of a neighborhood's demise, rather than the intended purpose of a curative regimen. The indeterminacy of all this merely suggests the indeterminacy inherent in urban diagnosis and prescription on the part of experts.

Urban thanatopsis

Urban death—or at least neighborhood death—in the nation's cities is coming to pass. It may be hindered by expertise, detoured

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by cajolery, impeded by charismatic leadership, and delayed by simple faith; but it will come. It is an event inevitably linked to the preceding urban growth and development.

My purpose here has been to open the issue for discussion—for scholars, if not for politicians. Urban thanatopsis is a topic that has been submerged, even suppressed, far too long. It can no longer be avoided. The mixed strategy that has been suggested—"ethical inefficiency" plus technical expertise plus symbolic political compassion—may not produce the results we would wish in the ideal. But even the results from such a mixed strategy are surely more desirable than the alternative—being overcome by an ignored inevitability.

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The ethnic miracle

ANDREW M. GREELEY

THE neighborhood is a 10-square-block area with almost 14,000 people, an average of 39.8 inhabitants per acre—three times that of the most crowded portions of Tokyo, Calcutta, and many other Asian cities. One block contains 1,349 children. A third of the neighborhood's 771 buildings are built on "back lots" behind existing structures; the buildings are divided into 2,796 apartments, with a ratio of 3.7 rooms per apartment. More than three quarters of the apartments have less than 400 square feet. Tenants of the 556 basement apartments stand knee-deep in human excrement when even moderate rainstorms cause plumbing breakdowns. Garbage disposal is a chronic problem—usually, trash is simply dumped in the narrow passageways between buildings. Nine thousand of the neighborhood's inhabitants use outdoor plumbing. The death rate is 37.2 per thousand per year.

These are the poorest of the poor people, making less than three quarters of the income of nonminority-group members in the same jobs. The rates of desertion, juvenile delinquency, mental disorder, and prostitution are the highest in the city here. Social disorganization in this neighborhood, according to all outside observers—even the sympathetic ones—is practically total and irredeemable.

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Blacks? Latinos? Inhabitants of some Third World city? No—Poles in Chicago in 1920.

The neighborhood is still there. You drive in from O'Hare airport and see the towering spires of St. Mary of the Angels, St. Stanislaus Kostka, and Holy Trinity. If you turn off at Division Street you will see that the manure boxes are gone, and so are the backyard buildings, the outdoor plumbing, the sweatshops over the barns, the tuberculosis, the family disorganization, the violence, and the excessive death rates.

For the most part, the Poles are gone too. Some of them remain, sharing a much more pleasant (and brightly painted) neighborhood with Puerto Ricans. Where have the Poles gone? Farther northwest along Milwaukee Avenue, even out into the suburbs—they are now a prosperous middle class. How have they managed to make it, this most despised of all the white immigrant groups? It is no exaggeration to say that no one really knows, and that the success of the southern and eastern European immigrant groups who frantically crowded into the United States before the First World War is as unexplained as it is astonishing. Indeed, rather than to attempt an explanation, many Americans—including some from those very same ethnic groups—prefer to deny the phenomenon of ethnic success.

Yet the "ethnic miracle" is one of the most fascinating stories in the history of the United States, an American success story, an accomplishment of the "system" in spite of itself; and while the "ethnic miracle" does not necessarily provide a model for later groups (in fact, it almost certainly does not), it does offer insights into how American society works that social-policy-makers can ill afford to ignore.

"Social disorganization"?

The neighborhood I described is called the "Stanislowowo" after St. Stanislaus Kotska, its parish church. At one time, it was the largest Catholic parish in the world (40,000 members) in the second largest Polish city in the world. Nobody in the United States between 1900 and 1920 did its parishioners any favors. In five of the years before the First World War, more than one million foreign immigrants poured into the country. They were ignorant, illiterate, and dirty; they spoke little English if any at all; their families, the sociologists of the time assured us, were chronically "disorganized." They had no tradition of freedom and responsibili-

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ty; they lacked political maturity. They were a bad bet to assimilate into American society.

Was there poverty and suffering in the Stanislowowo and neighborhoods like it? That was largely the fault of the immigrants themselves, Americans were told by their elites. The Dillingham Commission on immigration assured the rest of the country that the Italians were inherently disposed to criminal behavior and that the Polish family lacked stability—both groups were racially inferior. The walls of restrictive immigration legislation were quickly erected after the war to end immigration. Large-scale "Americanization" campaigns were begun to try to teach these illiterate peasants the virtues of good Americans, and there was great hope that the public high schools would mold the children of the immigrants (the parents were beyond hope) into good, loyal, dutiful citizens.

There were no quotas, no affirmative action, no elaborate system of social services, and, heaven knows, no ethnic militancy (although it need not follow that there should not be these things for the more recent immigrants to the big cities of the United States). There was no talk of reparation, no sense of guilt, no feelings of compassion for these immigrants. The stupid, brutal, but pathetic heroes of Nelson Algren's novels were about as much as most Americans recognized; "Scarface" and "Little Caesar" of the motion pictures were taken to be typical of the Italians who got beyond street cleaning, ditch digging, garbage collection, and waiting on tables. It is safe to say that in the 20th century, no urban immigrants have been so systematically hated and despised by the nation's cultural and intellectual elites. The stereotypes may be more sophisticated now, but they still portray the ethnics as hateful and despicable. Stanley Kowalski has been replaced by Don Corleone, but both still represent the white ethnic as a blue-collar, racist, hard-hat, chauvinistic "hawk"—even though available statistical evidence does not support the myth of the Godfather or the bigot, and lends no credence to the ethnic joke.

Closely related to the thesis of the racial inferiority of the eastern and southern European immigrants was the theory of their cultural inferiority. "Social disorganization" was the explanation of the plight of the Stanislowowians offered by the "Chicago school" of sociology. The cultural values of the immigrants were not able to absorb the shock of the immigration experience and the resultant confrontation with the more "modern" values of the host society. Crime, generational conflict, family disorganization, prostitution, and juvenile delinquency were the effects of this unequal meeting

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of a peasant and a modern culture. Several generations of scholars, administrators, and social workers were raised on such scholarly books as *The Gang, The Gold Coast and the Slum,* and *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*—which were in whole or in part about the Stanislowowo; much of the reform legislation of the 1930's was designed from that perspective. The problem with the poor was not their poverty but their "social disorganization" and "alienation." Fortunately for the ethnics, they stopped being poor before the reformers could set up high-rise public housing and dependency-producing welfare legislation to "undisorganize" them.

Across the Chicago River from "St. Stan's" is the infamous Cabrini-Green high-rise public housing project, one of the most evil things that good intentions have ever produced—a monstrosity that causes the very "social disorganization" it was designed to eliminate. It is a slum far worse than the author of *The Gold Coast and the Slum* could have imagined, and while the death rate may not be as high as it was in the Stanislowowo in 1901, the human demoralization in Cabrini-Green is far worse. (*Cooley High* of movie fame was once the parochial high school for St. Stan's.) If contemporary welfare, urban renewal, and public housing legislation had existed a half century ago, the Poles might still be poor, and sociologists might still be writing books about how the Polish family structure—one of the strongest in America—is "disorganized."

One need not conclude that there ought to be no government intervention to help and protect the poor. On the contrary, the "ethnic miracle" might have happened more quickly if the government had intervened to prevent discrimination and to facilitate the rise out of poverty. But the "ethnic miracle" at least raises questions as to whether social legislation would be more effective if it were to respect the culture and family life of the poor and fight poverty directly, rather than with mostly useless attempts to correct "alienation" and "social disorganization." There obviously are individuals and families so badly traumatized by either poverty or misguided efforts to "unalienate" them (or combinations of both) that they cannot cope with problems or urban living without help from society. But the "ethnic miracle" suggests that such help should be aimed at making them think and act not like psychiatrically oriented social workers but rather like the more successful members of their own cultural community.

A half century ago, the "disorganization" models of the "Chicago school" of sociology looked like a big change from the biological racism of the Immigration Commission. In retrospect, and in light

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of the "ethnic miracle," one is permitted to wonder if in fact the theory of "social disorganization" was not a more subtle but equally pernicious form of "cultural racism"—and one not absent by any means from the reform legislation of the 1960's.

Explanations for success

The 1920's and 1930's were bad times for the immigrants and their children. The fierce nativism of the 1920's and the grim and frustrating Great Depression of the 1930's kept them pretty much in the poverty of the immigrant neighborhoods. Only a few managed to claw their way out into middle-class respectability. But in the three decades since the end of the Second World War, an extraordinary economic and social phenomenon has occurred: The ethnics have made it. The Italians are now the third richest religio-ethnic group in American society—second only to Jews and Irish Catholics—and the Poles earn almost $1,000 a year more than the average white American in metropolitan areas of the North. In the middle 1940's, the curve of college attendance for young people for both Italians and Poles began to swing upward, so that by the 1960's, Poles and Italians of college age were *more* likely to attend college than the national average for white Americans.

Without anyone's noticing it, those who were doomed to be failures by their race, religion, language, and family backgrounds have now succeeded. Few of them are wealthy, some are still poor; but on the average their incomes are substantially higher than those of other white Americans living in the same cities and regions of the United States. Many Americans reject in principle the possibility of such a miracle; some of the ethnic leaders themselves (in a perhaps unintentional ethnic joke) vigorously deny the success of their own people; yet the data are beyond any reasonable doubt. In a very short space of time, the length of one generation, more or less, the American dream has come true; and some of the people who were children in the Stanislowowo in 1920 have lived to see and to enjoy the achievement of their dream. Even the Stanislowowo has changed for those who remain. The well fed, neatly dressed, scrupulously clean children who troop out of St. Stanislaus Kostka on a spring afternoon—grandchildren, perhaps, of the women who worked 60 hours a week in sweatshops filled with the stench of manure—are clearly the offspring of an affluent society.

There is doubtless much wrong with the United States of America, and we will doubtless hear all about it in the course of the 200th

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anniversary of the republic; but sometimes things have gone well—despite almost conscious efforts to make them go badly. The success of the eastern and southern European immigrant groups of the turn of the century is one of America's success stories. The achievements of the Jews have been well known for some time; only recently have we discovered that the Italians and the Poles have also done remarkably well. We do not like to admit it. Very few agencies or scholars, whose responsibility it is to study and understand American society, show any interest at all in the extraordinary success story of those against whom the immigration acts of 1920 were directed. It seems that we couldn't care less about finding an explanation.

Perhaps it was the public school—maybe good, solid American education undid the work of a thousand years of oppression and misery. The evidence, however, suggests the opposite. The success of the Polish and the Italians seems to have come *first* in income, then in education, and finally in occupation (and, as we shall see later, they are still impeded somewhat in occupational achievement).[1]

The few scholars who pay any attention to immigration have begun to wonder whether the conventionally understood progression from education through occupation toward economic success is all that helpful a model. Among the Asian immigrants to the United States, and among the Sephardic Jews in Israel, income parity seems to come before educational and occupational parity. In the Sephardic families, for example, with everyone working—husband, wife, and children—equality of family income with the Ashkenazics has already been achieved, although educational and occupational parity lag behind. It would seem very likely that most immigrant groups must first achieve some kind of basic financial success, and only then

[1] The empirical evidence on which this article is based comes from an analysis of a composite file assembled from 12 National Opinion Research Center (NORC) national sample surveys (A complete report will be published under the title *Ethnicity, Denomination, and Inequality* by Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, California.) The composite sample numbers some 18,000 respondents and, despite serious limitations, still represents the best collection of data currently available on American religio-ethnic groups. The United States Census cannot ask a religious question, and only recently has the Census' monthly "Current Population Survey" (CPS) begun to ask an ethnic question intermittently. However, since Polish Jews and Polish Catholics are combined under the rubric "Pole," and Irish Protestants (disproportionately rural southerners and more numerous than Catholics) are combined with Irish Catholics, the CPS data are useful only with respect to Italians. The NORC composite statistics, however, have been compared with the results of the CPS (50,000 respondents). There are only slight variations between the two; in the case of the Italians, a group for which the NORC data and CPS data are roughly comparable, there is virtually no difference in the statistics on education, occupation, and income. Unfortunately, until funding agencies are willing to support better data collection, composite survey data will provide the only available evidence for scholarly investigation.

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can they exploit the advantages of educational and occupational mobility and concomitant opportunities for even more dramatic income achievement.

However patriarchal the family structures may have been, the women of the ethnic immigrants went to work from the beginning—long before it became an upper-middle-class fashion. The income of many wage earners in a family no doubt provided an economic base for the ethnics to make their initial breakthrough—which occurred, perhaps, sometime in the early 1950's. (Data on neighborhood concentration of various ethnic communities indicate that the Poles finally began to move out from the center of the city at that time.) But by 1970, the women in Polish and Italian families were no more likely to have jobs than their nonethnic counterparts in the large cities of the North. So the income achievement of the southern and eastern European Catholics cannot be explained by multiple wage earners in the family—though there is a possibility that many of the men and some of the women may also have second and third jobs.[2]

Education and income mobility

The mean education of Polish, Italian, and Slavic Catholics ("Slavic" means non-Polish eastern Europeans) is substantially be-

TABLE I. *Education and Religio-Ethnicity*[1]

RELIGIO-ETHNIC GROUP	YEARS OF EDUCATION
Jewish	13.9
Irish Catholic	12.8
British Protestant	12.41
German Catholic	11.59
National white average	11.56
German Protestant	11.34
Scandinavian Protestant	11.32
Polish Catholic	11.11
Italian Catholic	11.07
Irish Protestant	10.95
"American" Protestant	10.93
Slavic Catholic	10.84

[1] Source: National Opinion Research Center.

[2] Nor do the 25 years of prosperity between 1945 and 1970 explain the "ethnic miracle," though they obviously created an environment in which such a miracle could occur. For not only did the ethnics improve their income during that quarter century, as did virtually everyone else, but they improved it *disproportionately*. At the end of the quarter century, not only were they better off than in 1945, they had improved their relative position in comparison with the rest of the population. Prosperity, in other words, provided the opportunity for the "ethnic miracle," but the miracle itself was a response to the opportunity.

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low the national white average of 11.56 years. The Poles and the Italians have little more than 11 years of education, the Slavs fall under 11 years (Table I on the previous page). However, when one looks at educational achievement *given parental educational level,* the Catholic ethnics have higher academic achievement than do British Americans; indeed it is higher than anyone else in the country save for the Jews—and the Italians have an even higher achievement than Jews.

Furthermore, if one considers college attendance by the various age cohorts (an indication of educational decisions made by an ethnic collectivity at a time when a given cohort was of college age), one can see that the slope of college attendance for the three southern and eastern European ethnic groups turned sharply upward in the 1940's; by the 1960's, it had crossed the national average.[3]

While Irish Catholics are not significantly different from British Protestants in occupational achievement, the three more recent Catholic ethnic groups were substantially beneath the national average in occupation and did not make up the difference even when parental education and their own education was taken into account. In other words, the Polish, Slavic, and Italian Catholics were not getting the occupational prestige to which their education seemed to entitle them in comparison with British Protestants.

However, despite their lower occupational achievement, the Catholic ethnic groups (save for the Slavs) earn more money than their British counterparts, and when the pertinent background variables are taken into account these differences become statistically significant. Indeed, the net advantage of Italians over British Protestants in income is higher even than that of the Jews. In other words, while they may not get the kind of jobs their education entitles them to, the Catholic ethnics seem to make more money than their occupa-

[3] The analytic technique used is a form of dummy-variable multiple-regression analysis in which each ethnic group becomes a dummy variable and is compared with the British Protestant group. The "net differences" among groups are arrived at by adding to the regression equation the dummy variables for region and for metropolitan residence, as well as for the number of years of the mothers' and fathers' education. Subsequent net differences are arrived at by adding individual educational achievement and occupational prestige to the regression equation. This method is somewhat different from that used in *Ethnicity, Denomination, and Equality* and is more "conservative" statistically, permitting estimates of the statistical significance of observed differences. I am grateful to Christopher Jencks for suggesting the technique to me. College attendance was measured according to the log of the "odds ratio" of attendance to non-attendance for each age cohort. Tests of statistical significance were used to determine that the slope of the three ethnic groups was different from the national slope.

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TABLE II. *Real Family Income and Religio-Ethnicity*[1]

RELIGIO-ETHNIC GROUP	1974 INCOME
Jewish	$14,577
Irish Catholic	13,451
German Catholic	12,543
Italian Catholic	12,473
Polish Catholic	12,257
British Protestant	12,208
National average for whites	11,892
German Protestant	11,500
Slavic Catholic	11 499
Scandinavian Protestant	11,284
Irish Protestant	10,714
"American" Protestant	10,572

[1] Source: National Opinion Research Center.

tional level entitles them to. On the face of it, it would appear that, like Avis, they try harder (Table II, above).[4]

In sum, eastern and southern European Catholics do more with their parents' education in terms of their own education than do other Americans, and they also do more with their occupation in terms of income earned than do other Americans. However, they apparently still are not able to convert education into the same level of occupational prestige as that of Jews and British Protestants.

A word should be said in passing about a slightly earlier "ethnic miracle," that of the Irish Catholics, who are the richest, best educated, and most prestigious occupationally of any gentile religio-ethnic group—the comparison again being made with their appropriate counterparts, those living in metropolitan regions in the North. Irish-Catholic college attendance for those of college age surpassed the national average as long ago as 1910, and has remained substantially above the average ever since, passing even the Episcopalians in the 1960's. The Irish Catholic income advantage over British Protestants is $1,243 a year (trailing behind the $2,369-a-year advantage of Jews). Many of those who are willing to admit that the Poles and the Italians may have achieved rough parity with the rest of the country find the spectacular success of Irish Catholics almost impossible to swallow.

There may be an important social policy hint in the apparent

[4] Since the analytic technique used in this article is somewhat different from that used in *Ethnicity, Denomination, and Equality,* there are minor differences in the tables between this article and the longer report. In addition, a different technique was used to take into account cost-of-living changes to bring income from surveys taken in the 1960's into line with income reported in surveys taken in the 1970's. Hence, income figures here are slightly higher than those in the longer report.

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primacy of income in the "assimilation" of the early 20th-century immigrants. Subject to much more careful investigation, *one might take it as a tentative hypothesis that the school is a rather poor institution for facilitating the upward mobility of minority groups—until they first acquire some kind of rough income parity.* The naive American faith that equality of education produces equality of income seems to have been stood on its head in the case of the ethnics. For them, better income meant more effective education.[5]

Nor did the public schools play the critical "Americanization" role that such educators as Dr. James B. Conant expected them to play in the 1940's and 1950's. Even taking into account parents' education and income, the most successful of the ethnics—educationally, occupationally, and economically—went to parochial schools, and they did so at a time when the schools were even more overcrowded than they are today, staffed by even less adequately trained teachers, and administered by an even smaller educational bureaucracy than the very small one that somehow manages to keep the parochial schools going today. Again, a social policy hint: Maybe what matters about schools for a minority group is, as my colleague Professor William McCready has remarked, that "they are *our* schools" (whoever "we" may be).

The legacy of the immigrants

So one must still face the puzzle: Despite the virtually unanimous opinion of educated Americans a half century ago, the children and

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[5] It should be noted that I do not intend to suggest a comparison between the white immigrants of the turn of the century and the more recent nonwhite immigrants to the city. The path of upward mobility which worked for one group at one time does not necessarily work for another group at another time. Comparisons may be interesting and suggestive, but they should not be pushed too far. The Polish immigrants were indeed abject and miserable, unwanted and humiliated—but they were still white. On the other hand, the apparent historical phenomenon of income preceding rather than following education for the ethnics does seem to add weight to the argument of those who presently wonder whether too much has been expected of education as a corrective of social pathology in the last two decades. The experience of the ethnics is interesting in itself; whatever hints for current social policy may be obtained from their study should be considered no more than that—certainly not as blueprints for imitation. Occasionally one hears an ethnic complain "Why can't 'they' work hard like we did?" but the evidence shows that most ethnics are well aware that nonwhites have to put up with greater obstacles. The irony of their comment is aimed not so much at the more recent immigrants but rather at those of the intellectual and cultural elite who despised the ethnics when they were poor, and have contempt for them now that they are middle-class. As the Irishman said, "Where were you when *we* needed help?"

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the grandchildren of eastern and southern European immigrants have achieved not only economic equality but economic superiority, on the average, in the United States. They were not supposed to be able to do it; to many people it is incredible that they have done it; and to almost everyone the explanation of their success is obscure. Now we see that the ethnics in the quarter century between the end of the Second World War and the end of the Vietnamese War did exactly what the Jews had done in the previous quarter century—and with apparent ease.

How did they manage it? The immigrants themselves were ambitious. Perhaps they were the enterprising and courageous young people in their own societies—and young they were. When we see movies like *Hester Street,* many of us are astonished to discover that the immigrants from eastern and southern Europe were disproportionately young, and either unmarried or just recently married. We all have a recollection of an old grandparent whom we knew during childhood, and without giving the matter much thought, we tend to imagine the immigrants themselves as old—forgetting that the old *babushka* or *mamacita* was once as young as we were.

The immigrants came from a Europe which, as one American historian has remarked, "invited desertion." The population expansion of the middle 19th century had created a land-hungry peasant class for whom there was no room either on the farms or in the cities. They came to the United States seeking the "good life," the kind of life that owning land made possible. They were fully prepared to work hard; indeed, a life of anything but hard work was beyond their comprehension. They would work hard to make money. "All the Italians want is money," remarked an observer around 1910, and like devout practitioners of the Protestant ethic, they would sacrifice to save as much money as they could. In 1905, when Poles were still pouring into the city of Chicago, 15 per cent of the money in Chicago savings-and-loan institutions was already in Polish-owned associations, a remarkable achievement for people who were scarcely off the boat. Credit buying was taboo; "cash money" paid for everything. Desperately poor people themselves, with scores of generations of poverty behind them, the immigrants could imagine no other way to live besides scrimping, sacrificing, saving. America did them no favors, gave them no special treatment, in fact discriminated against them, forced them into the most menial occupations and the most miserable housing, and exploited them through the most corrupt political structures in the country. Americans hated them, despised them, condemned them, and eventually tried to bar

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their relatives from joining them; they joked about them, stereotyped them, and tried to change them into "good Americans" by making them ashamed of their own heritages.

The Poles and the Italians, like the Irish and the Jews before them, bitterly resented such treatment, but they did not grow angry at the United States, for even though it did them no favors, it still provided them with two things they would never have had in the old country: personal freedom and the opportunity to convert the hard work they took for granted into economic progress. In the old country, hard work got you nothing; in the United States it got you, or at least your children or their children, a chance.

Hard work, saving, sacrifice—such is a tentative explanation of the "ethnic miracle." Ironically, the Catholic ethnics turned out to be very good at these "Protestant" and "American" traits that the Dillingham Commission thought they could never learn. To work hard, to save, to be ambitious for oneself and one's children—the immigrants needed no "Americanization" to learn that way of life. They came here with a dream; it was not that they expected something for nothing, but rather that their hard work would earn them something. For some of them, for many of their children, and for most of their grandchildren the dream came true.

Is that how it happened? It would seem so, though until much more careful study of the history of immigrant families is done, we will not know for sure. And it should be done in the relatively near future, while some of the immigrants and their oldest children are still alive to be interviewed. But curiously enough, many Americans, including ethnics like Michael Novak, are much more eager to believe that the American dream has not come true for the ethnics. If it hasn't, then there is nothing to explain.

In the process of economic achievement, have the ethnics "assimilated"? Have they absorbed the values and beliefs and behavior patterns of the host culture? To begin with, they came with many values in common. They were, after all, products of the same white-European, Judaeo-Christian heritage. They learned to speak English quickly, they wore the same clothes, listened to the same radio and television programs, read the same newspapers; and yet a remarkable diversity of values, attitudes, styles, opinions, and behavior has persisted. Affection and authority, for example, are recognizably different in Jewish, Italian, Polish, and Irish families, as are the styles with which they approach politics, the ways in which they consume alcohol, and the ultimate views they hold about human nature and the nature of the universe.

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Ethnicity and American culture

Furthermore, these differences do not seem to diminish with the number of generations ethnics have been in the United States or with the amount of education they have had. In a loose, pluralistic society like the United States, economic success and rather harmonious adjustment to other groups can be achieved while still maintaining a partially distinctive culture. Indeed, such a distinctive culture can be maintained without having to be self-conscious about it. The Irish propensity for politics and alcohol, for example, and the Polish propensity to vote (Poles have the highest voting rates of any American religio-ethnic group) are not affected by ethnic self-consciousness or militancy. The anxiety of the Dillingham Commission and its nativist successors about whether diversity threatened America's "common culture" missed the whole point: In America the common culture validates diversity in theory, if not in practice. You can be anything you want—religiously, culturally, stylistically—so long as you are committed to the fundamental political principles of the republic.

Ethnicity is not a way of looking back to the old world. Most of the immigrants were only too happy to get the hell out of it. Ethnicity is rather a way of being American, a way of defining yourself into the pluralistic culture which existed before you arrived. The last thing in the world the new ethnic upper-middle class wants is to define themselves out of the common American culture. Why should they? America may have done them no favors, but it still has been better to them than any society their families ever knew.

So the militant ethnic somewhere out there in "middle America" —hard hat on his head and gun in his hand, ready to tear society apart by resisting the advances of the nonwhite immigrants—is almost entirely a fiction of the imagination of liberals and leftists in the media and the academy. The ethnic may not always like some of the things he sees and hears on television, but his standard of living has doubled at least in the last quarter century, so he is not angry at the "American way"; he is not about to do anything to endanger his still precarious respectability and affluence. He may rejoice that the black activism of the 1960's has legitimated his somewhat more explicit and conscious pride in heritage, but the "ethnic revival" or the "new ethnic militancy" is largely another fiction of the liberal imagination.

Nor has the ethnic turned to the right. He is neither a "rugged individualist" nor a political reactionary, as many left-liberal commentators would so dearly like to believe. On social legislation, the

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Italian, Polish, and for that matter, Irish Catholics are still left of center, still members of the New Deal coalition. They did not disproportionately defect from the Democratic party to vote against George McGovern, nor were they strong supporters of George Wallace in the 1968 Presidential election. The myth of the massive Polish vote for Wallace is so powerful that it is practically impossible to debunk; yet the Poles were the most likely of all gentile groups to vote for Hubert Humphrey, and substantially less than the six per cent non-Southern vote for Wallace was recorded among Polish Catholics. It would surely be inaccurate to think of the children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren of the ethnics as left-wing liberals or militant integrationists (most militants seem to live in the suburbs), but on virtually every political and social issue facing the country today, the ethnics are either at the center or to the left of it. Their Irish coreligionists are either close to or just behind the Jews on most measures of liberalism. I do not expect such data to be believed, because too many people have too much emotional energy invested in the opposite opinion. The data, nevertheless, are impossible to ignore.

So the "ethnic miracle" was accomplished without the complete loss of values or family structures—and without a right-wing backlash either. Indeed it was accomplished without any notable desertion from the Democratic party. The Stanislowowians and their children and grandchildren apparently made it despite their Polish values and family structure.

But is the word "despite" appropriate? Might there be a possibility that there was something in the culture of the immigrants that actually facilitated the "ethnic miracle"? Preliminary but sophisticated research conducted both at the Department of Labor and the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) suggests that Catholics and Jews are more successful in American society than Protestants because of some special factor at work in their early childhood—perhaps a closer and more intense attention from parents. As Thomas Juster of the NBER observes, "Economists and other social scientists have recently begun to pay close attention to the possible role of preschool investments in children by parents as it affects subsequent educational attainment . . . [and to the] possible influence on earnings of different amounts of parental time spent with preschool or school-age children. . . . Taking account of family background factors like father's and mother's education and occupation, variables for both Jewish and Catholic religious preference have a significant (positive) impact on reported earnings relative to

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respondents' reporting of Protestant preference. . . . Plausible hypotheses are that they reflect differences in the cultural background to which the respondents were exposed during formative years or differences in the quality or quantity of parental time inputs. . . ."

Not only the Dillingham Commission but even the Protestant ethic has been stood on its head; the familial culture of the ethnics, their stubborn differences in family values, may well have turned out to be an economic asset. In the absence of further research, such a possibility will remain an intriguing speculation.[6]

Status versus income

Is all well then for the ethnics? Not quite. Their educational mobility is the highest in America, and their income achievement goes beyond what one would expect, given their education and occupation. However, they do not achieve the occupational status appropriate for their education.

Interestingly enough, this discrepancy occurs at the upper end of the educational and prestige hierarchies. Poles and Italians do as well in occupational prestige as anyone else if they do not go to college. However, among those who have attended college, Poles and Italians have notably lower occupational-prestige scores. For those who attended college, the "cost" of being Polish or Italian is about one-third as high as the cost of being black, and more than half that of being Spanish-speaking.

How can one explain this underrepresentation of the college-educated ethnics in the occupational-prestige levels to which their education should entitle them? In the past, many social scientists would have attributed the difference to a lack of energy, or ambition, or "need achievement" among the ethnics. However, the considerable economic achievement of the ethnics makes this explanation implausible. Others would suggest that the ethnics are more likely to devote psychic energy to income than to prestigious occupations—to become insurance brokers, for example, instead of college professors.

James Coleman and his colleagues asked the same question in their study of how blacks and whites maximize their resources in

[6] Let it be noted again that while ambition, hard work, and strong family support for achievement may have been the path to upward mobility for the white ethnics, it does not follow that the same path can or must be followed by more recent immigrants. The ethnic miracle is worth studying in itself even if it has no pertinence to more recent social problems or provides only useful insights for considering those problems.

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obtaining jobs. Using a technique called "canonical correlations," they concluded that there is a tendency for blacks to seek income in jobs, and whites to seek status. It would appear that British Protestants, Irish Catholics, and Polish Catholics follow exactly the same pattern of "investing" their education into status and income as do Coleman's whites (indeed, to almost the same numerical weights). To paraphrase Coleman, the status attributes of jobs attract British, Irish, and Polish ethnics; the income attributes of jobs attract Italians and Jews. The occupational disadvantage of the Italians relative to their education may be a result of an "overinvestment" in income achievement, which parallels that of the Jews. (The Jews have higher occupational status than their education "entitles" them to, but they achieve even higher income than their occupation "entitles" them to.) However, no such strategy exists for the Poles and the Irish, and the substantial underrepresentation of college-educated Poles and the moderate underrepresentation of college-educated Irish Catholics in higher prestige positions cannot be explained by a differential strategy. Thus the question of discrimination must necessarily remain open, at least for these groups.

Whatever the explanation—and much more careful research than is likely to be done would be required for certainty—it is a matter of everyday observation that Italian, Polish, and even Irish Catholics are largely absent from the world of the elite private universities, the large foundations, the national mass media, the big financial institutions (as opposed to manufacturing corporations), and certain of the intellectually oriented government agencies. At a national meeting concerned with the lack of women and nonwhite scholars this was attributed to the "intellectual inferiority produced by Catholic religious belief." Women and blacks, I was told, are absent because of discrimination, Catholic ethnics because their religion interferes with intellectual achievement. This explanation was offered with a straight face and obvious sincerity.

In fact, since 1960 Catholics have not been underrepresented in those groups pursuing academic careers, finishing dissertations, publishing articles, or even obtaining tenured appointments at the major *state* universities. The myth of Catholic intellectual inferiority simply will not stand up to examination in the light of valid empirical evidence—at least not for Catholics who are under 35, presumably the grandchildren of the immigrants. (Given where the eastern and southern European immigrants began, what is surprising is not that their children did not become scholars in proportionate numbers but that their grandchildren did.) If a religio-

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ethnic group is intellectually good enough to get its young people on the faculties of Michigan, Wisconsin, and California but not quite good enough to make it at Columbia, Yale, Harvard, or Chicago, one begins to wonder what subtle criteria for intellectual excellence are being used at the elite private schools.

There would be very few who would question that the lower occupational scores of the blacks who attended college are the result of discrimination. Unless one can come up with solid evidence for another explanation, intellectual honesty should compel one to take very seriously the possibility that the same explanation should be applied to the lower scores of Polish, Irish, and Italian Catholics.

Recovering the past

If there is any ethnic militancy at all, it is to be found not in the vast middle and lower reaches of income and occupational prestige but rather among the elite, those college-educated and graduate-school-educated ethnics who bump up against the residual nativism still present in the upper strata of American society. It is not the Slovakian steelworkers but the Michael Novaks who are the most likely to be angry—and with good reason. Or, as far as that goes, it is not the Irish cop or the Irish politician or the Irish attorney who grows angry at elite nativism, for they either do not encounter it or it does not affect them. (The reader may judge for himself whether the author of this article is an angry militant.)

Those of us who stand on the shoulders of the immigrants are ill at ease with our predecessors. Their raw acquisitiveness embarrasses us, and their sacrifices and sufferings cause us pain. It is hard to admit that we owe a great deal to those who came before us. We repress memories of places like the Stanislowowo in the same way we repress memories of such disasters as the Spanish Influenza or the Great Depression; they are too terrible and too close for us to think about very much. It took a long, long time before a movie like *Hester Street* could be made, and it may be another generation or two before the descendants of those brave, strong, ambitious young people who swarmed into this country between 1890 and 1914 will be able to relax sufficiently to place those urban pioneers alongside the other brave people who came over the Appalachian mountains a century earlier to pioneer an unexplored continent. The miracle of the frontier is now a standard part of American mythology. Perhaps by the tricentennial the ethnic miracle will have become one of the respected marvels of the American story.

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The great American gun war

B. BRUCE-BRIGGS

For over a decade there has been a powerful and vocal push for stricter government regulation of the private possession and use of firearms in the United States—for "gun control." The reader cannot help being aware of the vigorous, often vociferous debate on this issue. Indeed, judging from the amount of energy devoted to the gun issue—Congress has spent more time on the subject than on all other crime-related measures combined—one might conclude that gun control is the key to the crime problem. Yet it is startling to note that no policy research worthy of the name has been done on the issue of gun control. The few attempts at serious work are of marginal competence at best, and tainted by obvious bias. Indeed, the gun-control debate has been conducted at a level of propaganda more appropriate to social warfare than to democratic discourse.

No one disagrees that there is a real problem: Firearms are too often used for nefarious purposes in America. In 1974, according to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports, 10,000 people were illegally put to death with guns, and firearms were reportedly used in 200,000 robberies and 120,000 assaults, as well as in a small number of rapes, prison escapes, and other crimes. There is universal agreement that it would be desirable, to say the least, that these num-

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bers be substantially reduced. So everybody favors gun control. But there is wide disagreement about how it can be achieved. Two principal strategies are promoted. To use the military terminology now creeping into criminology, they can be called "interdiction" and "deterrence."

Advocates of deterrence recommend the establishment of stricter penalties to discourage individuals from using firearms in crimes. But "gun control" is usually identified with interdiction—that is, the reduction of the criminal use of firearms by controlling the access of all citizens to firearms. The interdictionist position is promoted by a growing lobby, supported by an impressive alliance of reputable organizations, and sympathetically publicized by most of the national media. Every commission or major study of crime and violence has advocated much stricter gun-control laws. The only reason that this pressure has failed to produce much tighter controls of firearms is a powerful and well-organized lobby of gun owners, most notably the National Rifle Association (NRA), which has maintained that improved interdiction will have no effect on crime, but will merely strip away the rights and privileges of Americans—and perhaps even irreparably damage the Republic. The organized gun owners advocate reliance on deterrence.

The debate between the "gun controllers" (as the interdictionists are generally identified) and the "gun lobby" (as the organized gun owners have been labeled by a hostile media) has been incredibly virulent. In addition to the usual political charges of self-interest and stupidity, participants in the gun-control struggle have resorted to implications or downright accusations of mental illness, moral turpitude, and sedition. The level of debate has been so debased that even the most elementary methods of cost-benefit analysis have not been employed. One expects advocates to disregard the costs of their programs, but in this case they have even failed to calculate the benefits.

The prevalence of firearms

While estimates vary widely, it can be credibly argued that there are at least 140 million firearms in private hands in the United States today. This number has been expanding rapidly in recent years.[1] Since 1968, 40 million firearms have been produced and

[1] One obvious reason for the growing gun sales is that the prices of firearms, like most mass-produced goods, have not risen as fast as incomes. The classic deer rifle, the Winchester 94, in production since 1894, cost 250 per cent of an average worker's weekly take-home salary in 1900, 91 per cent in 1960,

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sold. And these counts do not include the millions of guns brought back from the wars and/or stolen from military stocks. These figures are usually cited by advocates of interdiction as demonstrative of the enormity of the problem and as implying the dire necessity for swift and positive action. But they also demonstrate the incredible difficulty of dealing with the problem.

In the gun-control debate, the most outlandishly paranoid theories of gun ownership have appeared. Some people seem to believe that private arsenals exist primarily for political purposes —to kill blacks, whites, or liberals. But of course, the majority of firearms in this country are rifles and shotguns used primarily for hunting. A secondary purpose of these "long guns" is target and skeet shooting. Millions of gun owners are also collectors, in the broad sense of gaining satisfaction from the mere possession of firearms, but even the serious collectors who hold them as historical or aesthetic artifacts number in the hundreds of thousands.

The above uses account for the majority of firearms owned by Americans. Weapons for those purposes are not intended for use against people. But there is another major purpose of firearms —self-defense. In poll data, some 35 per cent of gun owners, especially handgun owners, indicated that at least one reason they had for possessing their weapons was self-defense. A Harris poll found two thirds of these people willing to grant that they would, under certain circumstances, kill someone with their weapon. This sounds very ominous, but it is such a widespread phenomenon that interdictionists have felt obliged to conduct studies demonstrating that the chance of being hurt with one's own weapon is greater than the chance of inflicting harm upon an assailant. The studies making this point are so ingeniously specious that they are worth expanding upon.

For example, the calculation is made that within a given jurisdiction more people are killed by family and friends, accidents, and sometimes suicide, than burglars are killed by homeowners. In a Midwestern county it was found that dead gun owners outnumbered dead burglars by six to one. Both sides of that ratio are fallacious. People do not have "house guns" to kill burglars but to prevent burglaries. The measure of the effectiveness of self-defense is not in the number of bodies piled up on doorsteps, but in the property that is protected. We have no idea how many

and 75 per cent in 1970. The relationship to annual median family income has been even more favorable—from 2.8 per cent in 1900 to 1.4 per cent in 1960 and 1.0 per cent in 1970. More important, increased competition during the past decade has lowered the absolute price of handguns.

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burglars are challenged and frightened off by armed householders. And, of course, there is no way to measure the deterrent effect on burglars who know that homeowners may be armed. Though the statistics by themselves are not particularly meaningful, it is true that the burglary rate is very low in Southern and Southwestern cities with high rates of gun ownership. Burglary in Texas would seem a risky business.

The calculation of family homicides and accidents as costs of gun ownership is equally false. The great majority of these killings are among poor, restless, alcoholic, troubled people, usually with long criminal records. Applying the domestic homicide rate of these people to the presumably upstanding citizens whom they prey upon is seriously misleading.

Other studies claim to indicate that there is little chance of defending oneself with a weapon against street crime or other assaults. But almost without exception, such studies have been held in cities with strict gun-control laws. My favorite study was the one purporting to show that it was very dangerous to attempt to defend yourself with a gun because the likelihood of suffering harm in a mugging was considerably higher if you resisted. But the data indicated only that you got hurt if you yelled, kicked, or screamed—but not if you used a gun.

Gun owners versus interdiction

All this, of course, is begging the question. Why do people feel it necessary to obtain firearms to defend themselves? The rising crime rates would suggest it is not lunacy. But the data are improperly understood. Despite the high crime rates, there is a very small chance of being attacked or robbed in one's home, or even during any given excursion into the highest crime area. But the average citizen does not make such calculations and certainly would not have much faith in them if he did. He is scared. The gun, if it does nothing else, gives the citizen reassurance.

This last is a reason for large numbers of guns being owned—not quite defense, but insurance. Many people have weapons tucked away with no explicit idea of how they might be used except "you never know when you might need one." No violent intent is implied, any more than a purchaser of life insurance intends to die that year. It is pure contingency.

Apparently most owners care little about their firearms *per se,* considering them as mere tools, to be properly cared for—and,

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because they are potentially deadly, to be handled with caution. Yet within the ranks of the gun owners is a hard core of "gun nuts" (they sometimes call themselves "gunnies") for whom firearms are a fanatic hobby. To them, the possession, handling, and use of guns are a central part of life. They not only accumulate guns, but also read books and magazines about firearms and socialize with kindred spirits in gun clubs and gun stores. Many such people combine business with pleasure as gun dealers, gunsmiths, soldiers, policemen, and officials of gun owners' organizations. All this is symptomatic of the earnest devotees of any hobby—there are similar ski nuts, car nuts, boat nuts, radio nuts, dog nuts, even book nuts. In this case, however, the "nuts" have political importance because they are the core of the organized gun owners, easily aroused and mobilized to thwart the enemies of their passion.

Polls are unreliable on this point, because internal inconsistencies in the data and common sense suggest that many respondents won't admit to gun ownership, but it appears that at least one half of all American households are armed. They own guns for recreation or self-protection. The principal form of recreation, hunting, has deep cultural roots. In rural areas and small towns, a boy's introduction to guns and hunting is an important rite of passage. The first gun at puberty is the *bar mitzvah* of the rural WASP. Possession of a gun for self-protection is based upon a perception of a real or potential threat to personal, family, or home security that is beyond the control of the police. Very rarely is there criminal or seditious intent. Yet these people are told by the interdictionists that their possession of weapons is a threat to public safety and order, that they must obtain permits, fill out forms, pay taxes and fees, and keep and bear arms only by leave of the state. Inevitably, some of them have organized themselves against such interdiction. With a million members, the NRA is the largest and most effective consumer lobby in America. It maintains its morale and membership by broadcasting the statements in favor of "domestic disarmament" by extreme and loose-mouthed interdictionists and by publicizing the legislative attempts to restrict gun ownership as merely part of a fabian strategy—to use the interdictionists' code words, a "step in the right direction"—toward liquidating the private ownership and use of firearms in America.

The interdictionist position rests on the self-evident proposition that if there were no guns, there would be no crimes committed with guns. But few are sanguine about achieving that situation. Instead, their argument is that if there were fewer guns and/or

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if gun ownership were better controlled by the government, there would be fewer crimes with guns.

Can interdiction work? Let us examine what is proposed. Guns and control are subdivided in several ways. Usually there is an attempt to distinguish between mere possession and use. Furthermore, different controls are suggested for different types of weapons—"heavy stuff" (machine guns and cannon); long guns (rifles and shotguns); handguns (revolvers and pistols); and "Saturday night specials" (cheap handguns). The levels of possible control can be roughly ranked by degree of severity: market restrictions, registration, permissive licensing, restrictive licensing, prohibition.

Market restrictions seek to limit the number of manufacturers, importers, or retailers of firearms, in order to keep better track of them. As in all areas of economic regulation, a principal effect is to promote the interests of the favored outlets, at the cost of the consumer. They do not deny anyone access to guns, but push up the cost—both the money cost and the personal inconvenience—thereby presumably discouraging some marginal purchasers, but surely few criminals, lunatics, and terrorists.

"Registration" is widely discussed, but no one is really advocating it. To register is merely to enroll, as a birth is registered. Merely to enroll weapons would be costly, to little or no purpose. What goes by the label of registration is actually "permissive licensing" whereby anyone may obtain a firearm except certain designated classes—minors, convicted criminals, certified lunatics.

"Restrictive licensing," such as New York's Sullivan Law, permits only people with a legitimate purpose to own a firearm. Police, security guards, hunters, target shooters, and collectors are obliged to demonstrate their bona fides to the licensing authorities. Typically, personal or home defense is not ordinarily considered a legitimate purpose for gaining a license.

Prohibition is self-defined. If there were no or few firearms already in circulation, a simple ban would be sufficient. But with tens of millions out there, prohibition would require buying or collecting existing weapons or some more complicated policy intended to make them useless.

The preferred program of most interdictionists today contains four elements, most of which have been attempted one way or another in one jurisdiction or another: 1) continuing and tightening all existing laws, 2) permissive licensing for long guns, 3) restrictive licensing for all handguns, and 4) prohibition of cheap handguns, the so-called "Saturday night specials."

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The third element is currently considered most important. Because the great majority of gun crimes are committed with handguns, control of them would presumably promote domestic tranquility. Concentration on handguns is also politically useful. Relatively few of them are used for recreation, so this would seem to outflank the objection of sportsmen to restrictions.

Existing gun control

There are reportedly some 20,000 gun-control ordinances in the various jurisdictions of the United States. Most are prohibitions against discharging a weapon in urban areas or against children carrying weapons, and are trivial, reasonable, and uncontroversial. Most states and large cities have laws against carrying concealed weapons, the rationale being that no person has a legitimate reason to do so. In a few large cities and states, particularly in the Northeast, a license is required to buy or possess a handgun, and in a very few but growing number of Northeastern cities and states a permit or license is required to possess any sort of firearm.

At first sight, licensing seems eminently reasonable. Dangerous criminals should not have weapons, nor should the mentally disturbed. But the administrative "details" of licensing become incredibly difficult. It is fairly easy to check out an applicant for a criminal record, which can be a legitimate reason for denying a license. But many criminals, judging from the comparison between reported crime and conviction rates, are not convicted of crimes, especially violent crimes, so the difficulty exists of whether to deny people the privilege of purchasing weapons if they have merely been arrested, but then set free or acquitted. Civil libertarians should be taken aback by this prospect. The question of mental competence is even nastier to handle. Is someone to be denied a firearm because he sought psychiatric help when his wife died?

From the point of view of the organized gun owners, licensing is intolerable because of the way that it has been enforced in the past. One of the peculiarities of most local licensing is the lack of reciprocity; unlike marriage licensing, what is recognized in one jurisdiction is not in another. In the Eastern states it is nearly impossible to travel with a firearm without committing a felony (not, of course, that this troubles many people). Also many police agencies, particularly in the Northeastern states with restrictive licensing, have engaged in some extremely annoying practices. Not

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only do they load up questionnaires with many superfluous personal questions, but they also require character witnesses to provide intimate information. When the police wish to restrict privately owned firearms, they resort to all manner of subterfuge. In a test of the local licensing procedure some years ago, the Hudson Institute sent several female staff members to try to make the necessary application. The forms were not available and the people responsible for the forms were absent.

Even when the applications are submitted, the waiting period is often deliberately and inordinately long. I have a friend on Long Island who spent three years getting a pistol permit for target shooting. Influence is useful, but even it is not necessarily sufficient. A staff aide to a leading New York politician who has frequently been threatened applied for a permit to carry a handgun as his boss's bodyguard. Even a letter to the Police Commissioner of New York City on the gentleman's stationery was inadequate; a personal phone call had to be made—and that has not speeded up the process very much. The system is not much better with long guns and sympathetic police. Immediately after New Jersey required the licensing of rifles, I happened to be in a police station in a suburb of Philadelphia when a young man came in to get his license. The process had taken six weeks. He commented bitterly, "It's a good thing that I planned well in advance for my Maine hunting trip." (By the way, if he had lost or damaged his weapon during a hunting trip, the Federal Gun Control Act of 1968 would have made it extremely difficult for him to get a replacement out of state).

This sort of anecdotal evidence can be continued almost indefinitely. It suggests to the organized gun owners that licensing systems are a screen not against criminals but against honest citizens, and that licensing authorities are not to be trusted with any sort of discretionary power. It is certainly an inefficient system that dribbles out gun permits and refuses to recognize self-defense as a legitimate reason for owning a gun, while muggers operate with impunity, illicit pistols are exchanged openly on the streets, and penalties for gun-law violations—even by people with criminal records—are very rarely imposed.[2]

Among the most unproductive local gun-control measures are

[2] The Police Foundation is currently engaged in a study of the details of local handgun-law enforcement. Unfortunately, because its head is known as a vocal interdictionist, the credibility of its results will necessarily be somewhat compromised.

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the moratoria permitting individuals to surrender their firearms without fear of prosecution. The police will then investigate such people to make sure they are not wanted by some other agency, and they are then entered in police files. (Obviously, if you really wish to dispose of an illegal weapon, you merely disassemble it and throw the parts from a bridge.) The number of weapons delivered under such programs is infinitesimal. An extension of such programs is the buying of weapons by police departments. This was attempted in Baltimore and obtained a substantial number of guns. But the total collected is a matter of simple economics: Large numbers of guns worth much less than the price offered will be obtained. Few valuable weapons will be turned in—and it is perhaps needless to note that there has been no perceptible effect on the crime rate.

The latest innovation in local gun control is a sort of interdiction through deterrence. Massachusetts recently passed a law mandating a minimum jail term of one year for possession of an unlicensed weapon. This reflects an interesting set of social values, because there are no such mandated sentences for burglary, armed robbery, rape, or even murder in Massachusetts. Every hunter who passes through the state on the way to Maine is risking a year in prison. What is happening is predictable: The law is not enforced.

The Massachusetts experience is both a caution to the interdictionists and a reassurance to the organized gun owners. If restrictive gun legislation is passed, the police will be hesitant to arrest ordinary citizens, prosecutors will be loathe to prosecute, juries will be unwilling to convict, and judges will devise ingenious loopholes.

Most of the existing interdiction laws have been in effect for many years, yet it is not possible to make any sort of estimate as to whether they do any good in reducing crime. Attempts have been made to correlate gun ownership and/or gun-control laws with gun-related crimes, but they are singularly unconvincing for the very simple reason that the data are so miserable—we have no firm estimate even of the number of guns available nationwide, much less in any given community, and it seems that the gun laws now on the books are rarely enforced. Some ingenious attempts to use regression analyses are easy to demolish.

In any event, no serious student of the subject would disagree that regional, racial, and cultural factors completely swamp the effects of gun-control laws. It is true that places with gun-control laws tend to have lower violent crime rates, but it happens that

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these are Northern communities with a long tradition of relative nonviolence, and the existence of gun-control laws on the statute books is merely evidence of the same relative peaceableness that is also reflected in the low rates of violent crime. The gun-toting states are also the gun-using states and the violent states, mostly in the South. And where Southerners or ex-Southerners are in the North, there are high violence rates regardless of laws. In recent years a few Northern states have imposed stricter licensing and use laws, with no perceptible effect on the crime rate. As with so many things, the laws on the books don't matter as much as their application. People in these states claim that any effects of their laws are spoiled by the spillover of easily available weapons from outside the state, which certainly sounds eminently reasonable. But if the economists are right, the gun-control laws should at least increase the cost or the inconvenience of getting guns, and therefore discourage their use. Retail handgun price differentials between open sources in the South and the black market in New York prove that the Sullivan law does pass the cost of a less efficient transportation system onto the consumer. But we have no idea of the effect of these increased costs upon the demand for guns. Presumably, those who want to buy guns for illicit purposes are not likely to be much affected by an extra $25 or $100 on the price tag.

The spillover effect has led many public officials in the gun controlling states to advocate essentially the extension of their systems of licensing to the entire nation. It is easy to sneer at this approach as the characteristic reflex of failed government programs—X didn't work, so let's try 10X. But the thesis seems plausible. If one could cut off the supply of guns from, say, South Carolina, they would be more difficult to obtain in, say, New York; that is, they would be more difficult to obtain *casually*. So the principal interest of gun controllers is in national legislation.

Federal firearms control

National firearms control legislation is a relative innovation. The first important law passed was the Federal Firearms Act of 1934, which was allegedly a response to the wave of gangsterism that swept the country in the depths of the Depression. Originally the Roosevelt Administration attempted to require national licensing of all weapons, but it was thwarted by a previously quiescent organization, the NRA. The watered-down version that passed

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Congress effectively prohibited (through punitive taxes) the private possession of submachine guns, silencers, sawed-off rifles and shotguns, and other weapons presumably of use only to gangsters. While there appears to be no information whatever on the effectiveness of this law, it seems to have been reasonably successful. Submachine guns are rarely used in crimes. That success, however, may simply reflect the fact that very few such weapons were in circulation, and their rarity gives them too much value to be risked in crime. (We know, of course, that there certainly are tens of thousands of unregistered automatic weapons in the United States, largely war souvenirs. Vietnam veterans brought back thousands of M-16's and Kalchnikov assault rifles in their duffel bags. But most of these gun owners have no criminal intent or any intention of selling such weapons to criminals.) Sawed-off shotguns and rifles may be made illegal, but they are impossible to prohibit; all that is needed is a hacksaw and a few minutes' time.

The second federal effort was the National Firearms Act of 1938. Again, this took the form of a revenue measure, requiring the licensing of firearms manufacturers and dealers. The law requires the firearms trade to keep records of the purchasers of weapons, and prohibits sales to known criminals. But only a simple declaration on the part of the buyer is required. These records are useful for tracing firearms. If a weapon needs checking, it is merely necessary to go back to the original manufacturer or importer and trace it through the serial number to the dealer. Although these records are not yet centralized, *in effect there has been registration of every new weapon sold in the United States since 1938.* How many crimes have been solved through this means, or how it has otherwise been effective to law enforcement, is by no means clear. It would not be difficult to find out, but no one has really tried to. Presumably, such registration is of some help to the police—though it seems to have had no effect on the crime rate or the conviction rates.

The most important national measure is the Gun Control Act of 1968, the immediate result of the disturbances in the 1960's and the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. The Act raised the taxes on firearms dealers, added cannon to the list of weapons subject to punitive taxes, prohibited the importation of surplus military firearms and "Saturday night specials," and prohibited the interstate retailing of all firearms. The last provision is the most important. The purpose was to prevent individuals like Lee Harvey Oswald from ordering weapons by

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mail under phony names. But it also has more annoying side effects. For example, if you live in Kansas City, Kansas, and wish to give your brother, who lives in Kansas City, Missouri, a .22 caliber rifle for his birthday, it is illegal for you to do so. If you are traveling in another state and see a weapon you wish to buy, you must go through the rigamarole of having it sent to a dealer in your own state. So far as one can determine, the law has had no perceptible effect in slowing down the interstate sale of arms.

Enforcement of federal firearms laws was given to what is now the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF) of the Department of the Treasury. These are the famous "revenuers" whose most important function was stamping out moonshining. But for economic and social reasons, the illicit liquor trade is fading and the BATF needs other things to do than break up stills. Since 1968 they have rapidly expanded their funding and activity in firearms control and now devote about half their personnel and budget to that function. BATF seems to be a crude and unsophisticated police agency, more like the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs or the Border Patrol than the FBI or the Secret Service. For example, it says it has no idea how many of the 250,000 licensed Title II firearms (i.e., machine guns, cannon, etc.) are held by police or other public agencies and how many by private citizens; nor has it any information on how many unlicensed Title II firearms were used for criminal purposes. Some of its methods of operating have been irritating to legitimate gun owners.[3] The Gun Control Act of 1968 says that BATF shall have access to the premises of a gun dealer during normal business hours, which BATF interprets to mean that there must be a business premises separate from, for example, a private residence, and that there shall be ordinary posted business hours. BATF also took upon itself the enforcement of local zoning laws. This problem arises because many gun owners have taken advantage of simple and cheap licensing procedures to obtain dealer licenses so they

[3] The BATF also made the grave error of providing the organized gun owners with their first martyr. In Maryland, in 1971, a local pillar of the community —a boy scout leader, volunteer fireman, and gun collector— was in his bathtub when a group of armed men in beards and rough clothes—BATF agents—broke through the door. Understandably, he reached for a handy antique cap-and-ball pistol and was shot four times and left on the floor while his wife, still in her underwear, was dragged screaming from the apartment. What had happened was that a local boy reported a hand grenade in the apartment. There was, but it was only the shell of a hand grenade. A simple records check would have been adequate to establish the resident's bona fides, and if there was an interest in following up the matter, someone might have come and knocked on his door. He is now crippled for life.

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can buy firearms wholesale. The majority of the nearly 150,000 dealers operate from their homes.

The organized gun owners see the activities of the BATF as a plot against them, not realizing that its habits and state of mind are not much different from other regulatory agencies. Once an activity is licensed, it becomes a privilege; a citizen is obliged meekly to petition the regulator for the boon and to modify his behavior to suit the needs of the bureaucracy. At the present time, the Department of the Treasury is asking for a large increase in the licensing fee of gun dealers in order to reduce the number of license holders—not for any public benefit, but because it will make the job of regulation easier for BATF.

"Saturday night specials"

The "Saturday night special" is the latest target of the interdictionist. It is identified as a cheap, unreliable, inaccurate, and easily concealed handgun, allegedly employed for large numbers of "street crimes." Because it is impossible to define a "Saturday night special" precisely, the NRA claims that the concept is fraudulent —but any definition in practice or law is necessarily arbitrary. Concentration on the "Saturday night special" has definite political advantages. Firearms enthusiasts scorn it as sleazy junk quite unsuited for serious work. Nevertheless, the organized gun owners are making an effective fight against banning the "Saturday night special." They were unable to block prohibition of its importation in 1968, but have resisted attempts to ban domestic manufacture and the assembly of imported parts.

It has been said against the "Saturday night special" that it is employed to commit a disproportionately large number of street crimes, and that getting rid of it would cut substantially into those crimes. A BATF study claimed that 65 per cent of "crime guns" used for street crimes in 16 major cities were cheap "Saturday night specials." Unfortunately, the text of the report reveals that these weapons were *not* those used in crimes but all those handguns collected by police, and anyone who knows anything about how reliable the police are in handling contraband knows that the chances of a quality firearm like a good Smith and Wesson finding its way into the reporting system are infinitesimal. Because the principal sanction against the illegal carrying of guns is on-the-spot seizure by the police, it stands to reason that individuals would pack the cheapest effective gun.

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But even if "Saturday night specials" are used for some half of crimes with handguns, their elimination is hardly likely to reduce handgun crime by that much. People buy them because they are cheap. If people want a weapon, and if their demand for handguns is highly inelastic, this only means that whatever guns fell outside of whatever arbitrary definition of a "Saturday night special" that was adopted would sell more. Perhaps this is recognized by the proponents of banning the "Saturday night special," because they have written bills to give the Secretary of the Treasury sufficient discretion to ban all handguns.

Actually, neither side cares much about the "Saturday night special" one way or another. The interdictionists advocate its regulation as a stepping stone toward tight licensing of handguns or the licensing of all guns, while the organized gun owners fear it as a camel's nose in the tent. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the "Saturday night special" is emphasized because it is cheap and is being sold to a particular class of people. The name is sufficient evidence—the reference is to "nigger-town Saturday night."

Crackpot schemes

Some other suggestions for gun control are simply silly. One idea is to have all weapons locked up in armories of various sorts, to be drawn by hunters or target shooters when they are needed. But most hunters and gun owners perform ordinary maintenance on their own weapons, so that a storage facility would have to provide room for that. The most overwhelming drawback against the idea is the enormous cost of providing such facilities—no one has calculated how much, and they would, of course, be targets for anyone who wished to obtain illicit firearms.

Another crackpot scheme is to record the ballistics of all weapons, rather like finger prints. This would not be enormously expensive, costing only a few million a year for new weapons only. But it is physically impossible. The pattern that the rifling of a barrel imprints on a bullet is not consistent and can be simply modified by changing the barrel. Ballistics is excellent at a one-to-one comparison between bullets, but cannot be employed for a general identification search.

Perhaps the most peculiar gun-control proposal to date was made by the Department of Justice in 1975. It recommended that, when the "violent crime rate has reached the critical level," possession

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of handguns outside the home or place of business be banned altogether. This assumes that those areas where law enforcement is least efficient could enforce a handgun ban, and that where the forces of public order are weakest citizens should be denied the means to defend themselves. In almost all high-crime areas the carrying—or at least the concealed carrying—of handguns is already illegal. (Hard data are necessarily spotty, but it now appears likely that the widespread private ownership of handguns for self-protection among crime-liable populations leads to some transfer to criminals, principally by theft. If this is true, it would not seem unreasonable to dry up the demand for guns by providing security to these people.)

The limits to interdiction

So the utility of interdiction has not and perhaps cannot be demonstrated. While the lack of evidence that a policy can be effective should make prudent men wary of promoting it, that does not mean the policy is necessarily without merit. Nevertheless, in the case of gun control it is possible to identify some weaknesses in the principles behind the policy.

To begin with, gun control as a general anti-crime strategy is flawed because most crimes, including many of the crimes most feared, are not committed with guns. Firearms are rarely employed for rape, home burglary, or street muggings. On the other hand, a good portion of the most heinous crime, murder, is not a serious source of social fear. The majority of murders are the result of passionate argument, and although personal tragedies, are not a social concern—ditto for crimes committed by criminals against one another. Furthermore, the worst crimes, involving the most dangerous and vicious criminals, will not be affected by gun control. No serious person believes that an interdiction program will be effective enough to keep guns out of the hands of organized crime, professional criminals, or well connected terrorists and assassins. And almost all the widely publicized mass murderers were eligible for licensed guns.

Gun-control advocates grant this, and emphasize the need to limit spontaneous murders among "family and friends" that are made possible by the availability of firearms. But the commonly used phrase "family and friends" is misleading. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reports classify relationships between murderers and victims as "relative killings," "lovers' quarrels," and "other arguments." The

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last can be among criminal associates, as can the others. Nor can we necessarily conclude that such murders are spontaneous. The legal distinction between premeditated and non-premeditated murder prompts killers (and their lawyers) to present murders as unplanned.

The very nature of interdiction suggests other weakness. It is a military term used to describe attempts, usually by aerial bombing, to impede, not halt, the flow of enemy supplies to the battlefield. Interdiction has been the principal strategy used in drug control; it works only when pressure is being applied at the street level at the same time that imports and production are being squeezed. If there are 140 million privately owned firearms in the United States and guns can last centuries with minimum maintenance, merely cutting off the supply will have little or no effect for generations, and if the supply is not cut off entirely (which no serious person believes it can be), an interdiction policy is hardly likely to have a major effect even over the very long run. To my knowledge, no interdiction advocate has given a plausible answer to the very simple question of how to get 140 million firearms out of the hands of the American people.

Even more to the point, is it cost-effective to try to deal with 140 million weapons when you are presumably concerned with a maximum at the outside of 350,000 weapons used in violent crimes? The odds of any gun being criminally used are roughly on the order of one in 400. For handguns the rate is considerably higher; for rifles and shotguns considerably lower. I estimate that in 1974, roughly one of every 4,000 handguns was employed in a homicide, compared with one in 30,000 shotguns and one in 40,000 rifles. There are probably more privately owned guns in America than there are privately owned cars, and with the obvious exception of murder, the rate of criminal use of firearms is almost certainly less than the rate of criminal use of automobiles. How are we to control the 400 guns to prevent the one being used for crime? And if we decide the only way is to reduce the 400, to what must we reduce it? It must be assumed that the one gun used for crime will be the 400th.

Moreover, interdiction is a countermeasure against crime. Countermeasures provoke counter-countermeasures: Substitution is the most obvious strategy. If guns cannot be bought legally, they can be obtained illegally—organized crime is ready to cater to any illicit demand. If cheap handguns are unobtainable, expensive handguns will be used. If snub-nosed pistols and revolvers are

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banned, long-barreled weapons will be cut down. If the 40-million-odd handguns disappear, sawed-off rifles and shotguns are excellent substitutes. If all domestic production is halted, we will fall back on our tradition of smuggling. If all manufactured weapons vanish, anyone with a lathe and a hacksaw can make a serviceable firearm. In the 1950's, city punks produced zip guns from automobile aerials. A shotgun is easily made from a piece of pipe, a block of wood, several rubber bands, and a nail.

A more promising variation is to go after the ammunition rather than the gun. Whereas firearms are easily manufactured and last indefinitely, modern ammunition requires sophisticated manufacturing facilities and has a shorter shelf life. Recently the interdictionists attempted to get the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to prohibit the sale of handguns on the basis of their being inherently unsafe. This was certainly the most intelligent gun-control tactic attempted so far; yet it failed because Congress explicitly prohibited CPSC from meddling in firearm matters. But a strategy directed against ammunition is also flawed. Hundreds of thousands of Americans "hand load" ammunition at home from commercially purchased shells, powder, and bullets in order to obtain substantial cost savings and to get precisely the sort of load they desire. Shell cartridges last forever and there are untold billions in circulation. Lead and steel bullets can be made by anyone with a stove or a file. So it would be necessary to close off powder sales as well. Smokeless powder would be extremely difficult to make at home, but the old-style black powder that fired weapons for 500 years can be manufactured by any kid with a chemistry set. Besides, any ammunition cutoff would be preceded by a long debate and bitter fight—during which time everyone would stock up. Also, thefts from the military, National Guard, and police would continue to be a major source of ammunition.

The costs of interdiction

Against the unconvincing or unsupported benefits of any interdiction law, one must count the costs; practically no attention has been paid to them. BATF is now expending $50 million per annum on enforcement of federal laws. Local police, court, and corrections expenditures are buried in budgets. The only serious accounting of costs was prepared for the Violence Commission of 1968 and was downplayed in the final report. New York's Sullivan Law licensing cost about $75 per permit in 1968; double that for

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current levels of expenditure; assume that a maximum of half the households in the country will register their weapons; the cost is therefore in excess of $5 billion—or more than one third of the present cost of the entire criminal justice system, from police to prisons. Simple "registration" on the model of auto registration would cost proportionately less, but the numbers are always in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

The financial costs do not exhaust the potential expense of gun-control laws. It is too much to expect government to count as a cost the time and trouble to a citizen of registering a gun, but we might look at the price of diverting police and other law-enforcement officials from potentially more rewarding activities.

But the worst cost is that of widespread flouting of the law. Existing gun controls are now being disobeyed by millions. More severe restrictions will be widely disregarded by tens of millions, including a huge group of stalwart citizens whose loyalty and lawfulness we now take for granted. Needless to say, the organized gun owners cite the Prohibition experience.

The limits to deterrence

Organized gun owners, on the other side of the issue, advocate enforcing the existing gun-control laws. I suggest that they do not take this recommendation seriously; the existing laws are not enforceable. Another suggestion would appear to be more credible at first glance—to employ deterrence by having add-on sentences for the use of guns in crime. But such laws are on the books in several states and are not enforced, for a fairly obvious reason: Americans are not concerned with the use of a gun in a crime, but with the crime itself. The murder or armed robbery is objectionable, not the gun. *Illegal gun ownership is a victimless crime.*

Several practical problems make a deterrence strategy extremely difficult. There is trouble putting anyone away these days, and enforcement of existing gun laws or of new laws would add to the overload of an already jammed criminal-justice system. Perhaps most important of all, when the effective sentence for premeditated murder is 7 or 8 years in a penitentiary,[4] how much leeway is there to add to sentences for lesser crimes? Given the advantages of a firearm to a robber, a few more weeks or months of jail is hardly likely to deter him from using it.

[4] The assassin of George Lincoln Rockwell was released from prison last year.

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The organized gun owners also claim that the widespread possession of firearms in itself deters crime; criminals are likely to be restrained by an armed citizenry. Perhaps—but consideration of criminal tactics suggests the idea is limited in application. Take burglars—by definition they prefer stealth, choosing unoccupied houses. If the owner is at home it is unlikely that he will awaken. A noise that arouses him will also alert the burglar. Should the householder awake, the burglar will probably hear him—especially if he is fumbling for a gun that is, as it should be, secured. In a confrontation, the burglar is alert, while the householder is sleepy-eyed. It is far more likely that a gun will be stolen than that it could be used against a burglar.

In store robberies, the robber also has the advantage. Guns are clearly not a deterrent, since the armed stores are those most often hit—because, to use Willie Sutton's phrase, "that's where the money is." Arming stores will certainly dissuade non-gun robberies, obliging robbers to escalate to firearms. Street robberies offer a similar tactical imbalance: The mugger has the initiative. It is not unknown for even police to be disarmed by criminals. It is true that areas with high gun ownership tend to have less crime against property, but this is probably largely the result of cultural factors. In any event the low quality of data on crime rates and gun ownership makes rigorous examination impossible.

International experience

Many peripheral arguments used in the gun control debate have little relevance to the issue, but must be addressed. Both sides will deploy the testimony of police chiefs on the desirability or futility of gun-control laws. Liberal interdictionists often cite the testimony of those gentlemen who have most illiberal views on most other law-enforcement matters. Most, but not all, big-city chiefs favor interdiction, while small-town chiefs generally oppose it, both nicely reflecting the views of their political superiors. But, for what it is worth, one can cite the Sheriff of Los Angeles County staunchly demanding stricter gun control laws and the Chief of Police of Los Angeles City saying that public order has broken down so far that only a fool would not arm himself. The gun owners gained strong reinforcement when the Superintendent of Scotland Yard recently pointed out that the number of guns available in America makes an interdiction strategy impossible.

A surprising amount of attention has been paid in the gun-control

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debate to international experience. In the world of gun control there seem to be only three foreign countries: Great Britain, Japan, and Switzerland. British gun control is taken by the interdictionists as the model of a desirable system. Guns are tightly regulated in the United Kingdom, violent crime is trivial by United States standards, and even the police are unarmed. But, as James Q. Wilson recently pointed out in this journal, the English situation is slowly eroding. The key to the low rates of personal violence in England is not in rigorous gun-control laws (which only date from 1920), but in the generally deferential and docile character of the populace. Perhaps it is significant that interdictionists point to "Great Britain" as their model; gun-control laws are even stricter in the other part of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland.

Japan is an even more gun-free country. Not only does it restrict the ownership of weapons, but it has prohibited the ownership of handguns altogether, and the rates of violent crime are so low as to be hardly credible to Americans. To which the organized gun owners reply that Japanese-Americans have even lower rates of violence than Japanese in Japan.

The third international comparison is used by the organized gun owners. Switzerland has a militia system: 600,000 assault rifles with two magazines of ammo each are sitting at this moment in Swiss homes. Yet Switzerland's murder rate is 15 per cent of ours. To which the interdictionists respond that the Swiss have strict licensing of weapons, though this would seem to have very little to do with the thesis that the mere availability of weapons provokes murder and other crimes with guns.

It is not entirely clear what these very different countries—with very different histories, political systems, and national character—have to do with the United States. Those interdictionists who defend civil liberties would be appalled at the suggestion that even the English system of justice be applied to the United States, much less the Swiss civil law or the authoritarian Japanese judicial system—none of which provides the criminal with the rights and privileges he has in the United States.

But let me muddy these waters by introducing two other countries of great interest. Israel is mostly inhabited by a people who have no tradition whatever of using firearms in self-defense and whose compatriots in America are for the most part unarmed and have little taste for hunting. But the objective political conditions of Israel have required them to arm in self-defense and the country bristles with public and private weapons. In addition to the armed

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forces, soldiers on pass or in casual transit in border areas carry their small arms with them. There is a civil guard in the tens of thousands. Every settlement has an arsenal, and individual Israelis are armed. The government requires registration of all weapons, but the system is very lenient on handguns (for Jews, of course; considerably tighter for Arabs) and very tough on rifles and shotguns, which might be used for military purposes. Israeli gun-control policy is directed toward internal security, not against crime. But despite these restrictions, the Israelis have accumulated huge numbers of privately owned military weapons, including automatics, in various wars and raids. These are held "just in case" they may be needed. But strangely, hunting is on the increase in Israel, as are target shooting and gun collecting, and there is talk of forming an Israeli national rifle association. Needless to say, the crime rate in Israel is much lower than in the United States.

The special conditions of Israel are too obvious to note, but Canada is closer to home, and it is odd that so little attention has been paid it. Since the early 1920's, Canada has registered all pistols on what is essentially the same basis as New York's Sullivan Law. Rifles and shotguns are sold freely, even through mail order. Canada's crime rate is much lower than the United States'. Here, too, cultural factors seem to predominate. It is not usually observed that without the South and Southerners (black and white) transplanted to the North, the United States would have crime rates comparable to other industrial nations. In fact, there is no appreciable difference in murder rates for "Yankee" whites in states and provinces on either side of the 49th parallel.

The best point of the interdictionists is that America is an exception to the international system of strict restrictive licensing. To which the "gunnies" reply that our ancestors came here to free themselves and us from the tyrannies of the Old World.

The Second Amendment

One reason the organized gun owners have bad public relations is that they take an absolutist position regarding the Constitution, relying on the Second Amendment of the Bill of Rights: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

To the NRA and other organizations this is an unqualified right, like the freedom of the press, not to be compromised on any

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grounds. To the interdictionists, the amendment merely guarantees the right of the states to maintain what is now called the National Guard. Actually, the status and meaning of the Second Amendment can be the subject of debate among reasonable men. It is certainly true that the original intention of the Second Amendment was that there be an armed citizenry. A "militia" as understood in the 18th century was indeed the people armed with their own weapons, and the inclusion of the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights was meant to protect the independence of the states and the people against the threat of the central government's employing the standard instrument of baroque tyranny, the standing army. However, there was no intention of the Founding Fathers to guarantee the use of firearms for recreation, nor for self-defense against criminals (although of the 38 states that have similar "right to bear arms" provisions in their constitutions, 18 specifically provide for personal defense, and one, New Mexico, for recreation).

The supreme arbiter of the Constitution has never ruled directly on the matter. The four cases that have come before the Supreme Court have been decided on narrow technical issues. Three 19th-century cases seem to support the view that states have the right to regulate firearms, and the one 20th-century case, which rose out of the Federal Firearms Act of 1934, was decided on the very narrow ground of whether a sawed-off shotgun was a weapon suitable for a well regulated militia.

Gun-owning lawyers claim that the doctrine of "incorporation" to the states of Bill-of-Rights restraints protects gun owners from state controls. This is reasonable on the face of it. However, the Supreme Court, as it was intended to do, applies the standards of an enlightened public opinion to the law. If the dominant elements in the country favor gun control, it is to be expected that the courts will rule accordingly.

The organized gun owners also see the armed citizenry as a last line of defense against insurrection. This idea has roots in the disturbances of the 1960's. While many Americans viewed the urban riots as the inevitable outcome of centuries of repression, many more merely saw police standing aside while looters cleaned out stores and homes, then envisioned the same happening to *their* stores and homes, and armed themselves. They did not understand that the looting was permitted only so long as it was contained to black neighborhoods; any attempted "breakout" would have roused the forces of public order from their lethargy. Indeed, the contingency plans have been prepared.

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The gun owners claim that any registration lists would be used by a conqueror or tyrant to disarm the potential resistance. A minor debate has grown up over what the Nazis did in occupied Europe, especially in Norway. A source in the Norwegian Defense Ministry says the Nazis did not make use of registration lists but rather offered to shoot anyone who failed to turn in his weapons.

But there are examples of the use of registration lists to disarm the public. All handguns were called in following the assassination of the Governor of Bermuda a few years ago. And the late, unlamented regime of the Greek colonels ordered the registration of all hunting weapons, followed by their confiscation, in order to disarm the royalists. Although the guns were later returned by the colonels, the present republican regime is continuing the control apparatus, presumably "just in case." When the IRA began its offensive in Ulster earlier in the decade, the Irish Republic used registration lists to confiscate all privately owned firearms in the South.

Phallic narcissism

A common assertion in the dispute is that gun owners are somehow mentally disturbed. The weapon is said to be a phallic symbol substituting for real masculinity, for "machismo." The historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., has written of "the psychotic suspicion that men doubtful of their own virility cling to the gun as a symbolic phallus and unconsciously fear gun control as the equivalent of castration." When queried about the source of this suspicion, he responded that he thought it was a "cliché." Such statements never cite sources because there are no sources. Every mention of the phallic-narcissist theory assumes it is well known, but there is no study or even credible psychoanalytical theory making the point. The germ of the idea derives from the 10th lecture in Sigmund Freud's *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis,* where he maintains that guns can symbolize the penis in dreams—as can sticks, umbrellas, trees, knives, sabers, water faucets, pencils, nail files, hammers, snakes, reptiles, fishes, hats and cloaks, hands, feet, balloons, aeroplanes, and Zeppelins. In other words, any long object can represent a phallus in a dream. Gun owners laugh at the thesis, or are infuriated. One said to me, "Anybody who associates the discharge of a deadly weapon with ejaculation has a *real* sexual problem."

Studies of hunters reveal that they are not much interested in

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guns or in killing but in the package of skills and camaraderie involved in the hunt. No one has studied the psychology of gun owners or even hard-core gun nuts, nor are there studies of gun phobia. Fortunately, there is a reasonable amount of sociological data available, in the form of public opinion polls, which are believable because they give support to ordinary observation. Gun ownership is more prevalent among men, rural and small-town residents, Southerners, veterans, and whites. Except for the lowest income groups (who may not be willing to admit ownership), guns are fairly evenly distributed by income. Education, occupation, and politics make little difference. Protestants are more likely to be armed than other religious groups. When asked why they own guns, most people respond that they hunt or target shoot. But most handgun owners have them for self-defense, and long-gun owners admit to defense as a secondary purpose of their firearms.

Two generations of good data show that substantial majorities of the populace support gun registration, and this is cited fervently by individuals who prefer not to cite similar data favoring, e.g., maintaining prohibitions on marijuana, having courts get tougher with criminals, and restoring capital punishment. Of course, questions on "registration" are considerably misleading, because no one is advocating the mere registration of weapons, but rather licensing. Most people live in places where there is no licensing and have no idea of the difficulty and expense this would impose upon public authorities and gun owners if the standards of New York or Connecticut were applied nationwide. Gun owners and people with knowledge of existing gun-control laws are considerably less enthusiastic for registration. Supporters of interdiction are more likely to be young, single, prosperous, well-educated, liberal, New England non-gun owners with little knowledge of existing gun-control laws.

The real issues

The main point that emerges from any serious analysis is that the gun-control issue, under conditions that exist in the United States today, has practically nothing to do with crime control. I think that there are other issues at stake.

In 1967, armed robbers with pistols killed two policemen in London. There was a wide outcry to "bring back the noose." The Labour government, opposed to capital punishment, responded by

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extending strict licensing requirements to small-bore shotguns used in rural areas for shooting birds and rodents. In Canada in 1974, there were two incidents of boys running amok with rifles in schools. There was wide agitation to restore capital punishment. The Liberal government, opposed to capital punishment, proposed a far-reaching program to eliminate registered pistols in private ownership and to register all rifles and shotguns. It is possible that gun control is, at least in part, a strategy to divert the mob away from the issue of capital punishment.

Political factors are clearly important. The assassinations of the 1960's and 1970's rather unnerved the politicians. But the wide social unrest of the 1960's probably had more impact. In 1939, George Orwell noted, "When I was a kid you could walk into a bicycle shop or ironmonger's [hardware store] and buy any firearm you pleased, short of a field gun, and it did not occur to most people that the Russian revolution and the Irish civil war would bring this state of affairs to an end." There is a remarkable coincidence between gun control agitation and periods of social upheaval. English and Canadian gun laws date from the "red scare" following the First World War, and the original United States national controls are the product of the violent days of the New Deal.

But underlying the gun control struggle is a fundamental division in our nation. The intensity of passion on this issue suggests to me that we are experiencing a sort of low-grade war going on between two alternative views of what America is and ought to be. On the one side are those who take bourgeois Europe as a model of a civilized society: a society just, equitable, and democratic; but well ordered, with the lines of responsibility and authority clearly drawn, and with decisions made rationally and correctly by intelligent men for the entire nation. To such people, hunting is atavistic, personal violence is shameful, and uncontrolled gun ownership is a blot upon civilization.

On the other side is a group of people who do not tend to be especially articulate or literate, and whose world view is rarely expressed in print. Their model is that of the independent frontiersman who takes care of himself and his family with no interference from the state. They are "conservative" in the sense that they cling to America's unique pre-modern tradition—a non-feudal society with a sort of medieval liberty writ large for everyman. To these people, "sociological" is an epithet. Life is tough and competitive. Manhood means responsibility and caring for your own.

This hard-core group is probably very small, not more than a few

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million people, but it is a dangerous group to cross. From the point of view of a right-wing threat to internal security, these are perhaps the people who should be disarmed first, but in practice they will be the last. As they say, to a man, "I'll bury my guns in the wall first." They ask, because they do not understand the other side, "Why do these people want to disarm us?" They consider themselves no threat to anyone; they are not criminals, not revolutionaries. But slowly, as they become politicized, they find an analysis that fits the phenomenon they experience: Someone fears their having guns, someone is afraid of their defending their families, property, and liberty. Nasty things may happen if these people begin to feel that they are cornered.

It would be useful, therefore, if some of the mindless passion, on both sides, could be drained out of the gun-control issue. Gun control is no solution to the crime problem, to the assassination problem, to the terrorist problem. Reasonable licensing laws, reasonably applied, might be marginally useful in preventing some individuals, on some occasions, from doing violent harm to others and to themselves. But so long as the issue is kept at white heat, with everyone having some ground to suspect everyone else's ultimate intentions, the rule of reasonableness has little chance to assert itself.

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National economic planning: a slogan without substance

PETER H. SCHUCK

AMERICANS habitually avoid systematic discussions of fundamental principles. There have been exceptions, of course—independence from England, slavery, isolationism, and involvement in Vietnam being the most notable—but it is striking that each of these great debates was closely intertwined with the question of war.

If the prospect of war has tended (as Dr. Johnson said of hanging) to "focus the mind," the prospect of national economic planning in America has not. The problem is not primarily one of rhetorical excess. There has been some, to be sure, nicely balanced between jeremiads lamenting the "serious threat to the welfare and freedom of our citizens" posed by planning (Thomas A. Murphy, chairman of General Motors), and warnings of enthusiastic partisans that "the alternative to planning . . . is disorder and drift" (economist Robert Lekachman). In fact, however, the discussion to date has suffered far less from hyperbole than from vacuousness, and we have considerably more to fear from the latter. The vast center of American public opinion seems perma-

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nently inoculated against contagion from ideological systems of the left or right. Appealing goals clothed in high-minded generalities, however, are quite another matter; they seem to go directly into America's bloodstream. Indeed, the more universally desired the goal and the more abstract its formulation (the two conditions are, of course, closely related), the more beguiling it tends to become.

So it is with national economic planning. The notion of planning —the explicit specification of desired goals and the means for achieving them—possesses the same kind of plausibility that any "rational" and "comprehensive" method has in a sophisticated, modern society afflicted with unforeseen, apparently random ills. Moreover, its objectives are humane, eminently desirable, and often achievable (at least if taken individually).

The case for planning

Perhaps most important, the argument for national economic planning is often made to rest upon factual premises that are, for the most part, incontrovertible. First, by historical standards the American economy has performed quite poorly during the last five years. High and persistent unemployment; intractable inflation; the weakness of the dollar in international markets; shortages of critical raw materials; environmental degradation; the bankruptcy of major corporations and chronic subsidization of important sectors of the economy; increased labor strife, particularly in the expanding public sector; erratic swings in the bellwether housing industry; widespread concern about capital shortages; relatively low levels of new capital investment; massive and politically uncontrollable federal deficits—these are some of the disturbing symptoms of contemporary macroeconomic pathology.

Second, some of the most profound shocks to our economy have taken us utterly by surprise. Few economists (except in retrospect) predicted the flattening of the Phillips curve (which defines the "trade-off" between inflation and unemployment), the rapid decline in industrial production in 1974-75, the double-digit inflation of 1973-74, the quadrupling of petroleum prices in two years, the duration of the OPEC cartel in the presence of large oil surpluses and excess capacity, the demise of major commercial banking institutions, the sudden imposition of wage-price controls, the enormous Soviet grain purchases, or the floating of the dollar. Looking back upon the wreckage of economic prognostications

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during this period, it is tempting to assume that there must be a better way to make economic policy than by simply reacting to cataclysmic events.

Third, many institutions in our economy already engage in long-range planning. Large corporations have done so for many years, and planning by state and local institutions has been encouraged by federal policy since the Section 701 grant program was inaugurated with the Housing Act of 1954. The federal government has steadily enhanced its formal coordinating capability, most notably through the growth of the Executive Office of the President, the new Congressional Budget Office, and planning requirements in much recent federal legislation. Polling evidence suggests that most Americans no longer perceive planning as an alien concept synonymous with socialism.

Fourth, many other nations engage in what is called national economic planning, and some of them, most notably Japan, France, and Sweden, have achieved real economic growth while retaining democratic political systems.

Fifth, dislocations and changes in one sector of the economy inevitably affect the performance of other sectors. Wage settlements in the steel industry, for example, quickly ramify, affecting production, distribution, and consumption patterns throughout the rest of the economy. As our society grows more complex and interdependent, the need for coordination increases, and planning purports to address this need.

Sixth, the information base concerning the nature and dynamics of our economy is extremely primitive, impairing our ability to make public policy judgments. Surprisingly little is known, for example, about the characteristics of the unemployed, about the effects of unemployment compensation upon their job-seeking behavior, and about the actual effects of public-service job programs on total employment. A planning system, it is argued, would generate such information and make rational policy-making possible.

Finally, the market system is deficient in many respects as a mechanism for allocating scarce resources. It often seems to perform in unpredictable, undisciplined ways, creating waste and satisfying private wants rather than urgent public needs. Senator Javits recently noted that "there are vast sums available for violent or simple-minded television programs, but in too many cases our education system produces virtual illiterates. Could we not strike some better balance?" National economic planning, he hastened to add, would do so.

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The formal scheme

The proponents of national economic planning, to their credit, have taken pains to describe for us what the planning process might look like, at least at the level of formal organizational structure. This scenario has been infused with legislative life in the "Balanced Growth and Economic Planning Act of 1976," drafted by the Initiative Committee for National Economic Planning (chaired by United Auto Workers president Leonard Woodcock and economist Wassily Leontief), and introduced by Senators Javits and Humphrey in May 1975. The authors fully recognized that the legislative process would knead this proposed planning structure into a somewhat different form. Indeed, only nine months later, the Javits-Humphrey bill had been supplanted by the Humphrey-Hawkins bill, and "economic planning" had vanished from the title of the bill, though not from the body. Advocates of planning could take some comfort in this change, however, for Humphrey-Hawkins was subsequently endorsed by all the Democratic Presidential aspirants, Jimmy Carter included.

Humphrey-Hawkins envisions a planning procedure that, however ambitious, is somewhat more modest than that of its precursor: preparation by the President of an annual "Full Employment and Balanced Growth Plan" proposing "in quantitative and qualitative terms . . . long-term national goals related to full employment, production, purchasing power, and other essential priority purposes, and the major policies and programs, including recommendations for legislation, to achieve such goals and priorities." The Plan would predict economic and social trends, estimate national "economic and social needs," and identify the "human, capital, and national resources necessary to fulfill the Plan's goals." Only one goal is specified in the legislation—full employment, defined as no more than three per cent adult unemployment within four years.

The implementing policies and programs to be proposed in the Plan to achieve this and other Plan goals need only be detailed enough "to furnish an integrated perspective" of needs and capabilities and to serve as "a long-run guide to optimum private, federal, state and local government action." Initially, however, the "priority policies and programs" are to include:

> 1) development of energy, transportation, food, small business, and environmental improvement policies and programs required for full employment and balanced economic growth, and required also to combat inflation by meeting full economic levels of demand;
> 2) the quality and quantity of health care, education, day care, and

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housing essential to a full economy and moving gradually toward adequacy for all at costs within their means;
3) federal aid to state and local governments, especially for public investment and unemployment-related costs;
4) national defense and other needed international programs; and
5) such other priority policies and programs as the President deems appropriate.

Humphrey-Hawkins also provides for consultation on the Plan with state and local government, a broad-based advisory committee, and Congress (through its normal committee structure, although with expedited procedures). When Congress, by concurrent resolution, adopts some version of the Plan, that resolution "shall serve as a long-term guide" for legislation relevant to its version, which shall be transmitted to the President "for such actions as the President deems appropriate."

This, then, is the proposed scheme for national economic planning. Like any formal structure, however, it is an empty vessel whose significance depends entirely upon its contents. What is perhaps most singular about the debate over national economic planning is how little attention has been paid to the content, the substance of planning.

As we have seen, proponents of national economic planning have been content to rest their case essentially upon dissatisfaction with existing economic and social arrangements and conditions, inferring that with a more rational, foresighted approach to economic life—national planning—we can do better. That inference, however, is a logical fallacy; one cannot derive the efficacy of policy B from the deficiency of policy A. If national economic planning is desirable public policy, it must be because it is both conceptually sound and consistent with the political reality in which it must necessarily function. Unfortunately, it is neither.

Ignorance and conflicting goals

Alan Altshuler, a student of the theory and practice of planning, has captured the essence of its conceptual and practical dilemma: "Those who contend that comprehensive planning should play a large role in the future evolution of societies must argue that the common interests of society's members are their most important interests and constitute a large proportion of all their interests. They must assert that conflicts of interest in society are illusory, that they are about minor matters, or that they can be foreseen and

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resolved in advance by just arbiters (planners) who understand the total interests of all parties."

American society is characterized by an extraordinarily rich profusion of sharply conflicting interests and values. James Madison observed that America could hope to do no more than control such conflict, which inhered in the nature of man and could be eliminated only by "destroying the liberty which is essential to its existence." His solution lay in growth and expansion: "Extend the sphere and you take in a greater variety of parties and interests," thereby preventing any special interest from being able to "outnumber and oppress the rest." That advice seemed eminently sound in 1786 when it was written. In a world of closed frontiers and sharply curtailed economic growth, however, it serves only as a quaint reminder that fundamental conflicts of values and interests are immutable and will almost certainly deepen.

Even the few goals mentioned in Humphrey-Hawkins are, to some extent, mutually inconsistent. Thus, even those economists who dispute the traditionally understood shape of the Phillips curve acknowledge that pursuit of "full employment" entails some sacrifice of "purchasing power," i.e., price stability. Similarly, meeting "national needs" in transportation necessarily implies, in a world of scarce resources, that national needs in some other areas, such as housing or education, cannot be fully met, even if such "needs" could somehow be determined.

There is another fundamental reason why specifying the goals of a national plan is an essentially meaningless exercise. Goals only have value to the extent that we strive to achieve them. And in order to attempt that, we must first have a theory of social causation. That is, even if we could agree upon abstract goals ("clean air," "quality education," "balanced growth"), and even if we could somehow reduce those goals to operational proportions ("emissions at five per cent of base year levels by 1978," "a college education for every high school graduate who wants one," "average wage increases not in excess of productivity gains")—a process that itself generates additional conflict—we must still decide how to get from here to there. To do that, we must understand how society "works."

The state of the art of social engineering is, to put the very best face on it, rudimentary and underdeveloped. Reasonable persons may differ as to whether this ignorance about the workings of social processes is an inescapable consequence of their inherent complexity, or whether our social scientists and policy analysts sim-

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ply have not yet had enough practice. My own conviction is that this ignorance can be dispelled only marginally at best, and that the kinds of propositions about social causality explicit or implicit in any national plan worthy of the name will be exceedingly problematical.

Our efforts to program large-scale social change, even in relatively narrow policy areas, have persistently failed to achieve or even approximate their original objectives. Thus it is generally conceded that urban renewal succeeded only in reducing the total housing stock, diverting the displaced poor into more expensive (and often inferior) housing, and hastening the demise of many small businesses, while effecting little significant improvement in the urban tax base. Federal efforts to forge a national transportation policy and regulate it into existence have culminated in the bankruptcies of major railroads, a highly wasteful trucking industry, and an airline industry that depends upon insulation from competitive forces. Welfare policy, by most accounts, has increased dependency and the isolation of the poor, and created a welfare bureaucracy refractory to reform of the system.

Can one seriously maintain that these (and many other) social interventions have miscarried only because they were "not sufficiently well coordinated," or were "inadequately funded," or were administered by incompetent or hostile agencies? Of course, such propositions can never really be tested; indeed, that fact may in part account for their widespread acceptance and persistence. It seems far more plausible to conclude, however, that we simply do not know how to build urban communities, fashion a national transportation system, or eliminate social disintegration, much less accomplish all of these objectives simultaneously through an integrated strategy or plan. Moreover, most social theories that we do possess can never really be tested, nor can they swim against the tide of political and economic constraints. The politicians and the public will *never* sit by quietly while the social scientists perform controlled experiments (if indeed such experiments were even possible in principle), nor will there *ever* be "enough" funds (whatever that means) allocated to such programs.

The state of the economist's art

If social theory is primitive, macroeconomic theory—a field that only a dozen years ago seemed to many to have attained the status of a science—is in utter disarray. It is not simply that the

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economists differ among themselves about the basic elements of such policy (though that is certainly the case). It is that *no* theory seems capable of explaining the turbulent economic environment of the recent past. Indeed, as MIT economist Peter Temin has recently pointed out, "our inability to settle on a single story of the Great Depression, or even to devise powerful tests of alternative stories, suggests that a certain diffidence with respect to current policy prescriptions is in order." He concludes that "in a serious discipline, it must be a cause of concern that one of the major events in our economic history is still so poorly understood."

Our most sophisticated understanding of the national economy —its important variables, their complex interrelationships, and theories of economic causality—is summarized in a handful of econometric models of the American economy that are employed by major consulting firms, large corporations, and government decision-makers. Great success has been claimed for these models (especially by their authors) and they are certainly among the best macroeconomic policy-making instruments we possess. Three economists recently used each of eight leading econometric models to ask two basic questions: First, in terms of the inflation rate and other economic indicators, what difference would it have made if President Johnson had imposed a permanent 10 per cent tax increase in 1966, instead of relying upon monetary expansion to help finance the expanding Vietnam War? (Almost all economists, including Johnson's chief economic adviser, had urged such a course in order to restrain the progress of inflationary pressures into the 1970's). Second, what alternative mix of fiscal and monetary policies during the period 1971-74—compared with the actual policies pursued—would have substantially improved the performance of the economy?

For those who believe that national planning would significantly improve matters, the preliminary results of this experiment must be unsettling. Despite numerous assumptions that greatly simplified and minimized the actual uncertainty of choices confronting actual decision-makers, the tax increase would have done "little to restrain inflation over the next nine years or to prevent instability in output and employment during the early 1970's." As for the efforts to design economic policy superior to that pursued from 1971-74, there was an "even wider dispersion of results" among the eight models "even as to the direction of policy (until 1974) as well as to magnitudes and combinations of different [policy] instruments." The researchers ended by confirming the conclusion of an

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earlier comparison of models: "[The econometric models] disagree so strongly about the effects of important fiscal and monetary policies that they cannot be considered reliable guides to such policy effects, until it can be determined which of them are wrong in this respect and which (if any) are right." Reflecting upon this research, one economist has asked the inescapable (if unduly harsh) question: "If the best of the modern day economic policies —even with the benefit of hindsight not available at the time— couldn't produce any better results than what actually occurred, does the economist have merely a marginal usefulness to society?"

Another chastening experiment was recently carried out not on the computer, but on the American consumer. I refer to the economic stabilization program of 1971-74. While this program was not national planning, it nevertheless was as close as our government has come since World War II to imposing centralized discipline on the economy. The results would be comical were it not for the damage to consumers that they reveal. In the eight months prior to the August 1971 freeze that inaugurated the program, the annual rate of inflation was 3.6 per cent, considerably lower than the inflation rates for 1969 or 1970. With the exception of the initial three-month freeze (Phase I) which held the rate to a two-per-cent level, the program accomplished an ever worsening cycle of inflation, interrupted only by a brief hiatus in 1973 (during which the annual inflation rate was held to 3.8 per cent). Whereas the eight months prior to Phase I had witnessed an annual inflation rate of only 3.6 per cent, the final eight months of controls managed to achieve the double-digit rate of 11.5 per cent, and the eight months following the termination of controls swelled the inflation to a staggering 12.2 per cent annual rate.

This is a stupefyingly dismal record of failure (although one which economic theory could easily have predicted), yet there are those already poised to try again. Their reasoning is that if the controls had been administered by officials (unlike those of the Nixon Administration) who really believed in them and wanted them to work, the program would have succeeded. Although there is little reason to believe that this is true, it is one proposition that may be tested all too readily in the future.

The number of important economic developments in the last few years that economists failed to predict (except, perhaps, in retrospect) is striking. Many have been mentioned above. These predictive failures imply the absence of an adequate theory of causation in a complex domestic and international economy.

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What is perhaps even more disturbing, given the imminence of national economic planning, is the abject poverty of our economic statistical base, upon which even a good theory must be grounded. In recent years, the inadequacy and inaccuracy of a broad spectrum of economic indices—including the wholesale price index, the consumer price index, the unemployment rate, and business inventory levels—have become quite evident. The wholesale price index, for example, reflects only list prices rather than actual transaction prices (which are often lower) and uses anachronistic seasonal adjustment factors; yet it is considered a bellwether statistic in economic forecasting.

Often the deficiencies of these indices become apparent only long after they have seriously misled policymakers. Herbert Stein has noted several examples: "In late 1972 and early 1973, both fiscal and monetary policy might have been more restrictive if the extent of the shortages in key industries had been appreciated. In 1974, policy might have shifted to a less restrictive posture earlier if the true amount of inventory accumulation had been known. In the middle of 1975, uncertainty in prescribing economic policy was increased by the fact that statistics from household surveys showed employment rising rapidly and statistics from employers' reports showed it rising slowly. . . . There is probably another layer of errors where we never did learn the truth."

Comprehensiveness and control

Comprehensiveness lies at the core of the planning "science." Because planning is an effort to rationalize and harmonize an intricate system of interrelated, potentially conflicting parts, it can succeed only if each of those parts is comprehended and coordinated in the plan. National economic planning must view the economy as a whole, considering each of its many intertwined sectors. If the plan embraces less than the whole, it loses its claim to rationality, for the planner's credo—like the ecologist's—is that complex environments are "systems" in which the first principle is that "everything is related to everything else." The difference is that the ecologist draws from this a policy of "do not disturb," while the planner's very raison d'être is to disturb existing social and economic patterns.

This complexity is at least as true of the modern post-industrial economy as it is of the ecology. The national economic planner, therefore, must necessarily understand and plan for not only tradi-

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tional economic sectors (such as extraction, production, distribution, retailing, transportation, money and banking) and those sectors that support basic economic functions (such as education, energy, land use, technology, natural resources, housing, and human resources), but also those private decisions that affect the economy indirectly, but significantly nonetheless. Perhaps the most obvious of these is the growth and distribution of population, and it is no accident that Otis Graham, Jr., a historian and enthusiast of national planning (with a capital "P," as he never fails to remind us), has referred to the movement for a national growth policy (NGP) as the "closest approximation of a drive for national Planning since the Planning movement of the early 1930's." Graham (after acknowledging the meaninglessness of the first two biennial NGP reports—the third was just released) notes with approval the irresistible logic of comprehensive planning:

> . . . economic Planning is not Planning at all, but merely planning. It is a way station on the road to social Planning; many societies have rested there for years, even indefinitely. When the momentous step is taken to finally set up a national economic Planning apparatus with that explicit function, it is usually some time before leading economic and political groups are comfortable with the presence of a planning commitment, staff, and process. Yet before long the logic of planning thrusts against these barriers, and it is seen that Planned social management must be broadly social, not merely economic in the narrow sense. Everything relates to everything. Thus public authority must explicitly encompass questions of population growth and distribution. A nation without a national growth policy may have a national planning staff in a building all their own, turning out five-year plans full of impregnable equations. But there is not yet Planning.

This comprehensiveness and scale clearly distinguishes economic planning (even with a small "p") from the kind of corporate planning that is often pointed to as a model for a system of national economic planning (although several studies indicate that business in fact does precious little of it). A more basic difference is that when government plans, it is in a far better position than even the most powerful corporation to manipulate the social environment in pursuit of the plan's objectives. And if corporate planning is to be looked to as a standard, it may be well to heed Murray Weidenbaum's observation that for years, the leader in long-range business planning was Lockheed.

Like Sisyphus, the national economic planner will see the cherished goal of comprehensiveness ever slipping away from him, for as time goes on the various parts of the economic system

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become more, not less, interdependent and the feedback loops become more, not less, attenuated. Perhaps the most dramatic example of this is the increasing extent to which our economy is affected by international factors. A major reason for the failure of wage-price controls, for example, was the rise in the world prices, beginning in 1973, of many essential commodities above domestic control levels. Controllers confronted a Hobson's choice of maintaining price ceilings below the world price, thereby encouraging diversion of domestic supplies and capital to export markets, or acquiescing to the inflationary pressures. Similarly, changes in the value of the dollar abroad can have an important effect upon the domestic economy, a fact that has become particularly salient in the era of flexible exchange rates. Yet American policy-makers possess essentially no influence over these factors.

There is an important analogy here to the dilemma that confronts the regulator of an industry. In order to rationally regulate a market, one must regulate the *entire* market in order to prevent uncontrolled activities from eroding the comprehensive scheme. But in embracing this larger number and diversity of transactions, the complexity of the regulator's task—and his need for political and informational resources—increases disproportionately. Elsewhere, I have observed that this expansionary tendency almost inevitably spawns regulatory failure; the more one *may* regulate, the less one *can* regulate, relative to one's responsibilities. So it is with the planner.

The problem of politics

The mere mention of national economic planning still evokes in some American minds images of commissars and Gosplans; the Soviet Union has given planning, like socialism, a bad name. Perhaps for that reason, the proponents of national economic planning in this country have emphasized that it will be "American-style" planning, wholly consistent with our institutions and ideals. This assurance, for all of its Madison Avenue overtones, is true, almost tautological. Its truth has important consequences, not the least of which is that some of the more extreme concerns about the effects of planning on our liberty cannot be taken too seriously. National economic planning may be a step down the road to socialism, but so are income taxation, social security, and the United States Postal Service. A long journey must begin with a single step, as the Chinese like to say, but most steps lead nowhere in particular.

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A more significant consequence of "American-style" economic planning is that it will be conducted in the midst of the web of American politics—which is to say that it will not be planning at all. As we have seen, planning—if it is to be an enterprise worthy of the name—must know where it is headed (the problem of goals), must know how to get from here to there (the problem of ignorance), and must be sweeping, rational, and able to manipulate the social and economic environment (the problem of comprehensiveness and control). The American political system ensures that none of these conditions will be met.

Fragmentation, decentralization, and lack of system are the very hallmarks of American society and politics, deeply embedded in our institutions. Richard Neustadt has captured this notion in describing our constitutional system as "separate institutions sharing power": the array of constitutional checks and balances between the three branches; an executive branch establishment presided over by Cabinet officials who are often political rivals of the President and who, in any event, inevitably fall under the sway of the career bureaucracies that they nominally head rather than under the influence of the short-timers in the Executive Office of the President; a "national party system" that is in fact little more than a collection of state and local political organizations, groups that are losing whatever coherence they once had to the forces of "reform" and the "independent" voter; a tradition of implementing national policy through the mediation of the state and local governments (the most recent manifestation being revenue-sharing); an expanding constellation of policy-oriented regulatory agencies that are independent of the President as a legal and structural matter, independent of the Congress as a practical matter, and uncontrollable by the judiciary except in the most extreme cases of lawlessness; a federal judiciary that has come to play not only a significant policy-making role, but a policy-implementing role as well, in areas as disparate as education, corrections, housing, health care, political party structure, and transportation; and, reflective of all the above, a political tradition of formally delegating great chunks of legal and political power to well-organized private groups.

Fragmentation, parochialism, and dispersion of power, however, reach their apogee in the Congress, which is precisely what the Founding Fathers intended. Even at the purely structural level, bicameralism, the committee system, and the two-year term obliterate any possibility of a comprehensive, thoroughgoing approach

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to policy-making. No fewer than 23 subcommittees, for example, assert jurisdiction over energy policy, a fact that helps to explain the patchwork fabric (one could not in conscience call it a "policy") that only recently emerged after two-and-one-half years of political wrangling and delicate compromise. Over the years, the perennially dismal fate of executive branch reorganization plans at the hands of Congress testifies to the jealousy of that institution over its political prerogatives and its hostility to any changes, "rational" or otherwise, that remotely threaten them. Yet such structural reorganization is perhaps the *least* "political" of all the items on the economic planner's agenda. The budgetary reform recently enacted by Congress has not yet met its first real tests (which can only be provided by a Democratic administration), but there are already signs that, like its predecessor of 30 years ago, it may require more coordination and system than the institution can bear. In sum, it is deeply ironic that the most enthusiastic proponents of national economic planning tend to be the same persons who take delight in the recent resurgence of Congress and its efforts to curtail Presidential power, for Congressional government will always be the scourge of planning.

Needless to say, the political system consists of far more than formal structures (though, as we have seen, structures have important consequences for planning). And it is the politicians who operate within those structures that assure the failure of planning. Where planning must be bold, comprehensive, rational, focused on the long term, and goal-oriented, the politician is necessarily—indeed, constitutionally—cautious, concerned with compromise, bargaining, and consensus, consumed with short-term (i.e., electoral) considerations, and hostile to explicit goals. A thoroughgoing consistency, the cardinal virtue of the planner, is fatal to the politician. It is no wonder, then, that most politicians harbor deep suspicions of planners and do not yield to them any genuine influence concerning policy.

The planner who would negotiate these shoals has a simple choice: He can either adapt to this political environment or he can plan in a vacuum, unnoticed, irrelevant, and without effect. There really is no other alternative, nor is there much doubt which road the planner-in-politics will take. John Dunlop recently noted with some bitterness and resignation that the Economic Policy Board does little planning but instead spends 90 per cent of its time dealing with political considerations—more specifically, "on tactics, on how to deal with Congress." Academic studies of other

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efforts to plan broadly in the context of American politics amply confirm Dunlop's observation.

In short, the more fragmented the political system, the less political power the planner will possess vis-à-vis the politicians and well-organized interest groups. And the less power the planner possesses, the more what he does will approximate bargaining or acquiescing rather than "planning," and the less politically relevant such "planning" as he does engage in will be. It is not surprising, then, that the French planning commission, according to a recent study, "plans" by negotiating extensively with large industry, promoting greater industrial concentration, and discouraging such "irrational" forces as competition. "If ITT were a French corporation," the study notes, "the Planning Commission would be its natural ally." Nor should one wonder that a recent study of national economic planning in Japan has found that "the national economic plan has very little relevance" to macroeconomic policy, and that even at the industry level, the plan largely ignores consumer interests and tends to favor the largest firms in the industry. Such "planning," it should be noted, has not prevented Japan from experiencing the deepest and most protracted recession since World War II, with rampant inflation, unemployment at its worst levels in 16 years, and no substantial improvement in sight.

The point, of course, is that the logic of politics and the logic of planning are fundamentally different and inconsistent. The planner can survive and have influence only insofar as he submits to the "irrationality" of political life; in the process of doing so, he ceases to be a planner and his policy prescriptions lose whatever special claim to our attention they may have had by reason of their "rational" and "objective" origins.

The inevitability of planning

Thus, "American-style" national economic planning would not be planning at all and could not fulfill the objectives of planning. It could provide no coherent social goals. It could not dispel our intractable ignorance about the social organism. The more comprehensive its reach would become, the less sure would be its grasp. And its rationality would quickly dissolve in the yeasty medium of politics.

If national economic planning would accomplish little good, however, it is also likely to do little harm, if only because the dominant, and predominantly hostile, political reality to which it

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must speedily adapt will deny it any real influence. Yet for all of that, national economic planning in some form appears inevitable in America. Its natural enemy, big business, has lost its hard edge of opposition, sensing perhaps that planning can be rather easily coopted. Indeed some of its most eminent field marshals, like investment bankers Robert Roosa and Felix Rohatyn, have openly defected. Schumpeter's description of the capitalist under attack rings even truer today, 35 years later: "They talk and plead—or hire people to do it for them, they snatch at every chance of compromise; they are ever ready to give in; they never put up a fight under the flag of their own ideals and interests."

National economic planning itself may command little respect today, but its cultural and technological precursors—the ethos of rationalism and social control, the language of systems analysis and management, and the mechanism of large bureaucratic organization—are very much in the saddle, and the forces of liberalism that ultimately have the most to fear from them are doing most of the spurring. In the final analysis, national economic planning will come not when its logic is compelling or its merits have been demonstrated, but when the remaining barriers to its acceptance have been eroded by such cultural and technological transformations. When that day comes, to borrow again from Schumpeter, the planners' bread will taste sweeter than capitalist bread simply because it is planned, and it will do so even if there are rats in it.

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The BART experience—what have we learned?

MELVIN M. WEBBER

THE Bay Area Rapid Transit system (BART) has many characteristics of a huge social experiment —in vivo, as it were. Key element in a bold scheme to structure the future of the San Francisco region, BART was to stem the much-feared decline of the older metropolitan centers, while helping to give coherent order to the exploding suburbs. By offering a superior alternative to the automobile, BART was to make for congestion-free commuting. If successful, it would provide a model for rationalizing transportation and metropolitan development elsewhere.

It was experimental only in the sense that nothing quite like it had ever been tried before. Nowhere in America had a regional rail system been built in contemporary times, and nowhere in the world had such a rail system been built in an auto-based metropolitan area. Although novelty inevitably implied risk, BART was nevertheless promoted with the high confidence, if not certainty, that governmental projects seem to require. Its developers saw it as a sure bet.

They could not have chosen a better test site. The auto-ownership rate in the Bay Area is one of the world's highest, and auto-using habits are firmly entrenched, fostered by an early full-freeway system. The metropolitan region is built around a traditional European-type center with a large concentration of office employ-

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ment and related service employment. Outside the small but high-density central city, which is set at the tip of the peninsula, the metropolitan settlement is organized in low-density suburban patterns, all of which were built around automobile transport. For test purposes, the Bay Area is further advantaged by having its urbanized areas topographically molded into narrow strips that parallel San Francisco Bay and follow the narrow valleys—a configuration superbly suited to the geometry of railroad lines, which also makes for long travel distances that, in turn, cry out for high-speed modes of transport. (The average Bay Area commuter lives 15.8 miles from his job; by comparison, Los Angeles commuters are only 8.9 miles away, Chicago commuters 6.6 miles, Philadelphia commuters 4.4 miles.) What better place, then, to test whether a technologically superior system could stem the decline of traditional public transit and at the same time compete with the automobile as the dominant commuter mode and shaper of metropolitan growth? If it didn't work here, the odds of its working in less suited areas would surely be low.

Following some protracted and perhaps inevitable construction and debugging delays, BART began carrying passengers in September 1972. In response, a massive effort has been launched to monitor its effects. The BART Impact Program is carefully watching a wide array of potential consequences, under the sponsorship of the Department of Transportation and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, with the local Metropolitan Transportation Commission in the key research and management roles. The aim is to learn what might be germane to other metropolitan areas and to derive some lessons from the Bay Area experience that might inform federal policy. Meanwhile, however, several other metropolitan areas have already developed transit schemes that resemble BART, without waiting for the findings of the Bay Area studies. Federal subsidies have already been allocated to Washington, Atlanta, and Miami; and several other cities are under consideration.

It will of course be some time before definitive results of the BART evaluation are in, but enough impact research has now been done to permit an early appraisal of how well BART is accomplishing the objectives that motivated its construction. In turn, enough has been done to permit some judgments concerning the wisdom of building BART-like systems elsewhere. As we shall see, BART's score is pretty low, implying that prospects for other cities are dim.

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Initial objectives

The original plans for the BART system were formulated in the mid-1950's. At that time Americans perceived the major urban policy issues to be decentralization, "urban sprawl," and the decline of the central cities, particularly of their central business districts. Federal government activities were focused upon urban-renewal programs aimed at bringing middle-class suburbanites back and rejuvenating what was dolefully mourned as the "dying heart of the city." Some prophets were predicting an impending demise of metropolitan centers, as the automobile opened opportunities for free movement in all directions and combined with rising incomes to allow average families spacious suburban houses in spacious settings.

These prospects were greeted with exaggerated gloom in San Francisco. Surely, no other American city is as proud and narcissistic—no civic leaders elsewhere so obsessed by their sense of responsibility for protecting and nurturing their priceless charge. The idea that San Francisco might go the way of Newark or St. Louis was utterly abhorrent. And so it was, as the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce proudly reported in a multi-page advertisement in *Fortune,* that the civic leaders of San Francisco and their neighboring kin initiated a major effort to keep the Bay Area from going the way that cities of lesser breed were headed. The campaign was masterful in both conception and execution.

San Francisco had long been the major business and financial capital of the Western states, but it had been challenged since World War II by Los Angeles and, in the mid-1950's, was barely holding its own against explosive growth in Southern California. Probably as fundamental a motivation as any behind BART was the desire to keep "The City" as attractive to corporate headquarters, financial institutions, and upper-middle-class residents as it traditionally had been. Of course, those with personal economic interests in the central district were especially keen to promote BART. It would be simplistic, however, to ascribe their promotional fervor to their private considerations alone. Imbued with civic pride and the spirit of community enterprise, none doubted that he was involved in a happy symbiotic crusade in which everyone would be a winner.

The Golden Gateway redevelopment project was one response to the doom-sayers. Launched in 1955, it has by now successfully converted a decayed produce-market district into a spanking new cluster of high-rise office buildings, luxury residences, elaborate

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hotels, restaurants, and the like. Delayed for years by lawsuits, the Yerba Buena redevelopment project, the sister enterprise aimed at remodeling a 19th-century district lined with residential hotels, warehouses, and a skid row, may soon finally convert the "South of Market" street district from a low-class neighborhood to a prestige address. Between them, the two redevelopment efforts may total up to 10 million square feet of high-rise office space. More than that, they have contributed immensely to the prosperity of the San Francisco central district and to its competitive posture.

So huge an expansion in floor space and commensurate office employment obviously demanded a comparable expansion in transport capacity. BART was to provide a major increase in accessibility, supplemented by extension of the freeway system and improvements in downtown parking.

But BART was intended to do far more than bring commuters into San Francisco; it was conceived from the start as a regional system that would foster the growth of the entire Bay Area. With trains stopping on average at only 2.5-mile intervals, each station would be highly accessible, with a competitive advantage over other locations in the rivalry for apartment houses and for offices and other commercial establishments. The designers expected stations in suburban centers to attract major concentrations of offices and retail shops, while outlying stations would become surrounded by high-density housing and shopping facilities, serving commuters to the regional centers.

Simultaneously, the designers intended BART to supply the essential accessibility that would convert downtown Oakland into a major regional center. The junction of BART's four lines in the middle of Oakland's business district would indeed make that the most accessible point along BART's 71-mile route. Oakland has responded by launching its own downtown redevelopment project, which is now turning a marginal shopping area into a modern-looking business complex.

The civic leaders who promoted BART chose a rail system over additional highway improvements because they feared that the prophets of intolerable congestion might be right. The prospect that more population and more automobiles would overload the capacities of road systems seemed plausible enough to commend a system that simultaneously had a high capacity yet was conservative in its space demands. And besides, since San Francisco was a world center along with Paris, London, and New York, didn't it deserve a subway system comparable to others in its league?

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Design considerations

The design criteria were thus clear: The new system had to be 1) capable of bringing increasing numbers of peak-hour commuters from near their suburban homes to within a few minutes' walk of their downtown offices, 2) attractive enough to travelers to be more than competitive with the automobile, and 3) financially viable.

The planners' response was to design a modern, electrified suburban railroad. Believing that buses could not attain the speed necessary to make them attractive to commuters, they rejected the alternative of using them as rapid-transit vehicles. Instead, they modeled their system after the New Haven and Long Island railroads, giving it much better downtown distribution with several subway stations under the main streets of San Francisco and Oakland.[1]

BART is misnamed as a "rapid transit" system. It is a hybrid among rail transportation systems, combining features of interurban electric lines, central-city subway lines, and current suburban railway lines, with the design elegance of modern aircraft and the control instrumentation of early spacecraft. As a hybrid it represents a compromise among desirable qualities of the several transport types. Unlike the interurban electric railways it cannot run in non-stop from outlying suburbs, and unlike New York subways it can offer no express service, because each station along the route is a mandatory stop. Unlike the subways of Paris, Tokyo, or London, which are interconnected networks of lines, BART offers one route in each compass direction and hence only limited distribution across the urbanized area it serves.

Because of its misnomer and because it fits none of our stereotypes, BART has been befuddling its critics, who seem unable to categorize it tidily. The important fact is that BART was designed to meet the rather specific purposes enumerated above, and those purposes happen not to be the ones by which some critics have judged it, reflecting social concerns that were not widely shared when BART was designed. For example, it was never intended to serve the kinds of short-distance trips that local buses, trolley cars, and center-city subways serve. It was not designed to carry low-income persons from central-city homes to suburban factories, even though BART officials belatedly voiced such claims.

Rightly or wrongly, BART was designed to transport peak-hour commuters from suburbs to central business districts. In turn, it was intended to generate the following effects:

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to reduce peak-hour highway traffic congestion,
to reduce time expended on commuter travel,
to foster central district growth,
to generate development of subcenters throughout its region,
to raise land values,
to accommodate suburbanization of residence and centralization of employment,
to reduce land area devoted to transportation facilities.

The expectations of some enthusiasts have sometimes been rather extreme, viewing BART as a remedy for whatever snake oil fails to cure. In turn they have generated a wave of criticism in both the popular and professional media that has often been comparably extreme. Such expectations and criticism are unreasonable. BART represents a serious response to perceived problems in regional development, planned with the advice of some of the world's most accomplished engineers and designers. Because it is the first of its kind and is now being watched so closely by officials in other cities around the world, and because it is so terribly expensive, we must soberly check whether the outcomes its planners expected are being realized.

BART's patronage

Prior to the 1962 bond election that authorized BART, the key informational document was the so-called *Composite Report,* published in May 1962.[2] Among the important expectations there were hopes 1) that BART would divert 48,000 workday autos from the streets and highways by 1975 and 2) that 258,500 daily passengers would be riding BART in 1975—157,400, or 61 per cent, diverted from automobiles, 39 per cent from existing transit systems.

Although 1975 has arrived and passed, it is not yet possible to submit those predictions to the definitive test, for BART was late in getting started, and thus has not yet developed a "seasoned" patronage. Moreover, the system has been so besieged by electronic and mechanical difficulties and rising costs that it is still not operating to design standards nor offering any weekend schedule. With these qualifications in mind, we can nevertheless compare the actual volumes being experienced with the predicted patronage.

The record of BART's average daily patronage is shown in Table I, which also indicates the forecasted levels. Some of the shortfall must reflect the chronically unreliable schedules and the associated long waiting times at stations, owing to equipment

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TABLE I. *Forecast as Against Actual BART Patronage, June 1976*

Route Segment	Average Weekday Trips: 1961 Forecast for 1975	1976 Actual	Actual as Per Cent of Forecast
Transbay	77,850	53,880	69
East Bay	129,493	39,725	31
West Bay	51,153	37,765	74
Total	258,496	131,370	51

failings. Some of the shortfall must also reflect sheer deficiencies in prediction; the forecasters had little prior experience to base projections upon, because there had never been a BART-like system in this kind of metropolitan area or the analytic tools for forecasting the demand for this new product.

The Concord line into San Francisco is proving highly attractive, with peak-hour standees outnumbering seated passengers. When enough cars are available to provide seats for most riders, patronage will undoubtedly exceed current levels. Other lines are doing much less well, however, and the net effect is that *total patronage is running at about half of the initial expectations.* Instead of the 258,500 weekday passengers forecasted, only 131,400 were riding in June 1976. Peak-hour riders across the bay number 8,000, a little over one fourth of the designed capacity of transbay trains—28,800 seated passengers per hour.

There are several surprises in those figures, however. Although the *Composite Report* expected that 61 per cent of riders would be diverted from private automobiles, in fact *only 35 per cent formerly made the trip by car.* In response to a BART customer survey, about a fourth of the riders said they had not made the trip at all before BART began operating. However dramatic the apparent volume of newly generated travel may be, it actually represents only a small portion of new trips BART has triggered, for it has generated additional *auto* trips as well.

BART initially reduced the number of cars on the streets and highways by 14,000 (not 48,000, as forecast). In turn, in accordance with the Law of Traffic Congestion (which holds that traffic expands to fill the available highway space until just tolerable levels of congestion are reached), other people began driving their cars on trips they would not otherwise make. Perhaps they are suburban wives who now have the family car during working

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hours. Perhaps people are visiting friends, now that highways are less crowded. Whoever they are, the net effect is an increase in the amount of sheer mobility within BART's region by both road and rail.

BART has brought about a rise in total transbay travel by both auto and public transit. Between 1973 and 1975, the proportion of daily transit riders on the bridge rose from 17 per cent to 22 per cent. Buses used to carry all 17 per cent; they are now down to 10 per cent, while BART is serving 12 per cent, a third of them in midday. During the peak hours, BART and buses split the transit passengers evenly, each carrying 50 per cent of them.

Half of all BART's transbay passengers formerly rode the bus. In contrast, those using *local* buses seem not to find BART as attractive, probably because of the wide station spacing. Indeed, even during the two-month transit strike, only 10 per cent of the East Bay bus riders used BART instead. Three fourths of all BART passengers travel over seven miles; half of them travel over 12 miles; a fourth over 19 miles! Clearly, BART is serving the long-distance travelers, as intended; but it is carrying only half as many travelers as intended.

The effect on highway traffic

BART's effects on auto traffic are a great disappointment. Although it has indeed attracted some 44,000 trips per day that used to be made in private cars, that is far fewer than the 157,000 forecasted. At most, the overall change in the three counties served may be a small net reduction in auto-traffic volume since BART began; but the change might also be a small net increase. The available regional data make either conclusion plausible.

There was a clear short-run reduction in auto traffic just when BART's transbay service began in September 1974, but BART may have had little to do with it. The gasoline shortage had just cut into auto use, and at the same time gas prices were rising to 60 per cent above their previous levels. Simultaneously, economic recession was increasing unemployment levels (up to 11 per cent in the Bay Area), while inflation was compelling many families to cut their spending levels and perhaps their automobile use.

Under those circumstances, we would normally expect reduced highway traffic volumes and, consequently, reduced congestion. In fact, traffic counters on the several Bay Area bridges do record a reduction in auto travel throughout the region in the period

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1974-75. But the surprising fact is that the Bay Bridge, which parallels BART's transbay tube, experienced a smaller proportional reduction than any of the other bridges across San Francisco Bay. Auto travel on the bridge was sustained despite the inauguration of BART transbay service. Paradoxically, because so many commuters switched from buses to BART, the number of buses in the bridge traffic stream was reduced, thus creating more space for cars. Contrary to plan, even if only to that extent, BART has made it easier to commute by car.

It is clear that the enthusiastic expectations of dramatic reductions in auto volumes have not been realized. If BART is having any effects on overall vehicular traffic on the Bay Bridge, they are as yet so slight as to be undetectable, not exceeding two per cent or about one year's normal growth in traffic.

Pretty much the same picture emerges at the Berkeley Hills tunnels, where BART patronage has been high. The start of BART service in May 1973 was associated with a levelling of auto traffic volumes. However, a few months later traffic volumes rose again. They are now higher than ever in the auto tunnel that parallels BART's tunnel, and congestion tie-ups occur just about as frequently as they ever did.

California's Department of Transportation has made a serious attempt to measure BART's effects on highway congestion. On a few routes roughly paralleling BART's lines, peak-hour travel times were found to be reduced sharply when BART service began, demonstrating that even a few cars taken off a full freeway can convert sluggish traffic movement into a free-flowing traffic stream. It appears that where freeways ran at capacity levels, BART is making for appreciable improvement in travel times. However, the marginal autos that spell the difference between congestion and free movement are so few in number (even a two per cent reduction can be sufficient) that one cannot count on their continued diversion. On some tested routes, travel times have already crept up to pre-BART levels. On a few they were unchanged throughout the pre-BART and post-BART periods.

So the conclusions are unambiguous. 1) BART is serving large numbers of suburban commuters, as predicted. 2) People are traveling more, by both car and public transit, despite rising energy costs and undoubtedly as a direct result of the new travel capacity that BART has supplied. 3) Half of BART's transbay riders come from buses, which BART has replaced—at very high cost, as we shall see later on. 4) BART has not effected a significant change

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in automobile-use habits, so traffic volumes and road congestion are still at just about pre-BART levels, but will no doubt rise as auto use increases.

The effect on metropolitan development

During the 12-year period 1964-75, 35 high-rise office buildings were completed in San Francisco's central district, enclosing 18,500,000 square feet of floor space. During the next six years an additional 17 buildings are scheduled for completion, enclosing another 10,000,000 square feet. These are the structures that followed approval of BART's construction plan, each within an easy 10-minute walk of a BART subway station. Comprising 52 buildings and over 28 million square feet, they were the *cause célèbre* in the citizens' revolt against the "Manhattanization" of San Francisco, the joy of The City's regency, and the conundrum confronting transit planners elsewhere, who now wonder whether rapid-rail transit in their towns will trigger similar explosions. Whatever one's urban-design preferences—whether one loves or detests The City's new look—the question remains, what was BART's role in all that?

It is not clear to what extent BART caused the office boom, and to what extent the expected concentration of offices caused BART. Plausible explanations are obvious for either theory. BART officials like to claim credit for the spectacular change in San Francisco's skyline; they say it is a direct result of improved commuter access from the metropolitan region. However, they also argued from the outset that BART was primarily needed because forecasts of impending downtown office employment raised the specter of the ultimate traffic jam. The rub is that those forecasts were based explicitly on the assumption that BART would be built. If that reasoning were carried full circle, it should then be inferred that, without BART, there would be fewer offices concentrated downtown, less concentration of traffic downtown, more decentralized patterns of office employment, and hence no need for a BART-type system. Needless to say, that circle of reasoning is usually not closed.

Large-scale office construction in other Western and Midwestern metropolitan centers suggests that the building boom might have happened anyway, for many of them have had similar booms, although none except Chicago has had anything like BART in sight. During the 12 years following BART's successful bond election,

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San Francisco's high-rise office buildings were expanded by 4,200 square feet for every 1,000 people in the metropolitan region. By contrast, Houston, the automobile city *par excellence*, added 5,500 square feet per 1,000 population, Chicago 4,500, and Dallas 3,500.

The past couple of decades have marked America's transition to the post-industrial service economy. Growing proportions of all jobs are in management and related services, new occupations that are conducted in offices rather than in factories. San Francisco has always been a center for the service occupations, and high proportions of firms coming to Northern California have traditionally sought locations in The City. Accelerating expansion of service activities during the 1950's, 1960's, and 1970's coincided nicely with the civic determination to renovate the city center. New office space was quickly filled, encouraging others to invest in rentable space; and they in turn found other waiting tenants within the growing services sector eager to be in the center of things. In effect, optimistic prophecies of blossoming central business activity became self-fulfilling. The more buildings that touched the skyline and the greater the subway-construction mess along Market Street, the more that companies wanted to be in on the action; and more engendered still more. Once the old-fashioned boom-town spirit spread, it became self-generating, building on its own image, enticing still more firms in search of the prestigious addresses, proving once again that nothing succeeds like success.

Surely BART was part of the generating force, for it was a massive piece of the big construction set. But there are no categorical answers to the question about the size of BART's role in San Francisco's reconstruction. I am inclined to think that it would have happened anyway, but that BART nonetheless made its happening bigger and quicker.

Is the story likely to be repeated elsewhere? Probably only in those cities having a comparable attraction for headquarters offices and ancillary business services. However, as the experiences of Houston, Dallas, and Denver emphatically show, a BART-type rail system is not a necessary condition for a city building boom of this sort. Unquestionably, adequate transport services are essential, but effective transport comes in many other forms as well. Those other Western cities have been undergoing explosive central office-building expansion while relying on automobiles and buses. But for the promotional attraction of BART, San Francisco might have done as well with intelligent development of its own road transport system.

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Suburban sputter

The initial plan for BART was also to generate growth at selected subcenters throughout the metropolitan region. In addition to the high average speed, that was the other rationale for widely spaced stations. The planners fully expected that increased accessibility at train stations would make the surrounding areas attractive to business firms and apartment dwellers, following the model of earlier commuter railroads in the East. In turn, clusters of offices, shops, and high-density housing around these stations would visibly restructure the region, stemming the drift toward low-density dispersion and urban sprawl.

It is now 14 years since the BART project was approved, and there is, as yet, little evidence to corroborate those forecasts and hopes. Most suburban stations stand in virtual isolation from urban-development activity in their subregions, seemingly ignored by all except commuters who park their cars in BART's extensive lots.

By being heavily subsidized and charging fares well under its actual costs, BART has appreciably reduced monetary commuting expenses for outlying suburbanites who work in the central cities. *Thus, rather than deterring suburban sprawl, BART may instead be encouraging it.* The unexpected popularity of its suburban Concord line clearly signals the response of suburbanites to the bargain rates being charged. We know of no explicit empirical evidence that BART is bringing about further suburban spread, but the parallel history of freeway-induced reductions in travel costs is unambiguous. Even though BART's land-use effects may not yet have been made manifest, the longer-run expectations should be clear. If BART is to influence the future course of suburban development at all, it seems as likely that it will be an agent in spreading suburban growth as in concentrating it.

Perhaps a basic flaw in the initial planning was the failure to take into account existing high-level (and virtually homogeneous) accessibility throughout the Bay Area. The ubiquitous network of streets, highways, and freeways, combined with extremely high auto availability, made for a context that scarcely resembled the 19th-century urban settings that earlier suburban railroads were fitted into. Bay Area residents move about within the metropolitan area with great freedom; they can go from virtually anywhere to anywhere else with only occasional delays, because the road network makes all points within the region highly accessible to all others.

When BART added additional accessibility on top of existing

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levels, it was proportionally only a small increment. Suburban and downtown stations are only slightly more accessible now than before BART was installed, scarcely enough to have significantly affected the location plans of many households and firms. If the rail line had been the major access route, things would have been different. But overall accessibility in this road-rich metropolitan region has not been appreciably modified, and so neither have urban development patterns.

Land use and transportation systems are highly interdependent. BART's failure to attract many riders may also be contributing to its failure to attract building investors in the areas of its stations. Moreover, seeking to reduce land-purchase costs while encouraging the park-and-ride habit, BART designers located stations at some distance from established suburban business centers and then surrounded them with parking lots. As a result, potential developers are compelled to build outside easy walking distance, and so most go to the established centers instead. It is almost as though the right-of-way agents who purchased property and the engineers who located the stations were either oblivious or opposed to the objective of fostering suburban clustering. It is also reasonable to believe that land-use effects take a long time to become manifest, especially in an auto-oriented society, and that we shall therefore have to wait another 10 years or so before we will know whether BART will affect development at all.

Who rides and who pays

Everyone expected from the outset that BART would have to be bought with solely local funds. There were no other options at the time, for BART's planning preceded by a decade federal government financial support for transit. Indeed, it may be that BART's favorable publicity may have so popularized rail transit that in some degree BART is responsible for the availability of federal subsidy funds today. But at the time it was being designed, the Bay Area was on its own.

The plan was to draw upon the traditional source for local capital improvements, general obligation bonds secured by a property tax. Those were the bonds approved in November 1962—at that time, the largest local bonding referendum ever, amounting to $792 million. The fund was to be sufficient to pay the full costs of all the capital plant except the transbay tube and the rolling stock. The tube was to be built with tolls collected from bridge

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users. Rolling stock and all operating expenses were to be paid from fares collected from BART users.

Subsequently, when capital costs began to exceed initial estimates, it became necessary to find other resources. Among those explored were supplements to auto-license fees, higher bridge tolls, and general highway-improvement funds. These were forcibly opposed by those who disliked a direct tax on motorists. In the end, the 1969 state legislature authorized a $150 million bond issue, financed by a one-half of one per cent addition to the general sales tax within the three-county district that was to be served by BART.

These three sources of capital funds (property taxes, sales taxes, and bridge tolls) then still turned out to be insufficient, for there was not yet enough money to buy the cars. Fortunately, the federal transit grant program was initiated in time to permit BART to purchase its rolling stock (federal grants have by now amounted to $305 million), and a parallel state-aid program was initiated that now yields an annual subsidy (about $2.6 million this year).

The 1962 *Composite Report,* circulated prior to the public vote on the bonds, had presented a favorable estimate of operating revenues and costs for 1975-76. BART's own current financial reports now present a far more gloomy picture:

TABLE II. *BART Operating Revenues and Expenses (Fiscal Year 1975-76)*

	MILLIONS OF CURRENT DOLLARS:	
	1962 COMPOSITE REPORT	ACTUAL (PRELIMINARY)
Gross Fare and Concession Revenue	$24.5	$23.7
Operating Expense	13.5	64.0
Net	$11.0 surplus	$40.3 deficit

When it became apparent that fares would be insufficient to cover the costs of rolling stock and operations, the 1974 state legislature authorized, as emergency aid against the impending operating deficit, a temporary extension of the one-half of one per cent sales tax to be applied to the operating deficit. This yields about $28 million per year, enabling BART to continue operating until the latter part of 1976, by which time an extension or some other operating subsidy will be needed.

As of June 1976, the overall picture of BART expenditures and sources of funds looked like this:

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TABLE III. *Sources of Funds for BART*

	MILLIONS OF CURRENT DOLLARS	PER CENT OF TOTAL
Capital Funds		
General Obligation Bonds	$792	50
Sales Tax Revenue Bonds	150	10
Toll Bridge Revenues (for Transbay Tube)	180	11
Federal Grants	305	19
Miscellaneous Revenues	159	10
Total	$1,586	100
Annual Operating Funds (1975-76 Estimates)		
Fares and Concession Revenue	$23.7	37
Sales Tax Revenue (0.5 per cent)	27.7	43
Property Tax Revenue (5¢ for Operations)	5.0	8
State Aid (0.25 per cent Sales Tax)	2.6	4
Federal Aid	.5	1
Borrowings Against Capital Account	4.5	7
Total	$64.0	100

Over 60 per cent of capital costs and about 55 per cent of operating costs are being paid by all residents of the three-county district through taxes on property and retail sales, both inherently regressive modes of taxation. E. G. Hoachlander has estimated the incidences of BART's property and sales taxes and compared them with household incomes.[3] His findings indicate that both taxes fall proportionately far more heavily on households with low incomes than on wealthier ones.

In an effort to keep track of customers' characteristics and preferences, BART has been conducting a periodic survey of its riders. The last completed survey was made in May 1975, eight months after transbay service started and two-and-a-half years after East Bay trains began running. The riders' own reports on their incomes reveal that they are not a representative sample of the Bay Area population. They are drawn far more heavily from the upper sectors of the income distribution than from the lower, reflecting, no doubt, the system's attractiveness to long-distance suburban commuters. The chart below compares the income distribution with the proportions of family incomes devoted to BART taxes. The ratio of these two curves is 40 to one: The percentage of income paid to provide tax support for each ride taken is 40 times greater for an individual in the lowest income group than for one in the highest income group. Clearly, the poor are paying and the rich are riding.

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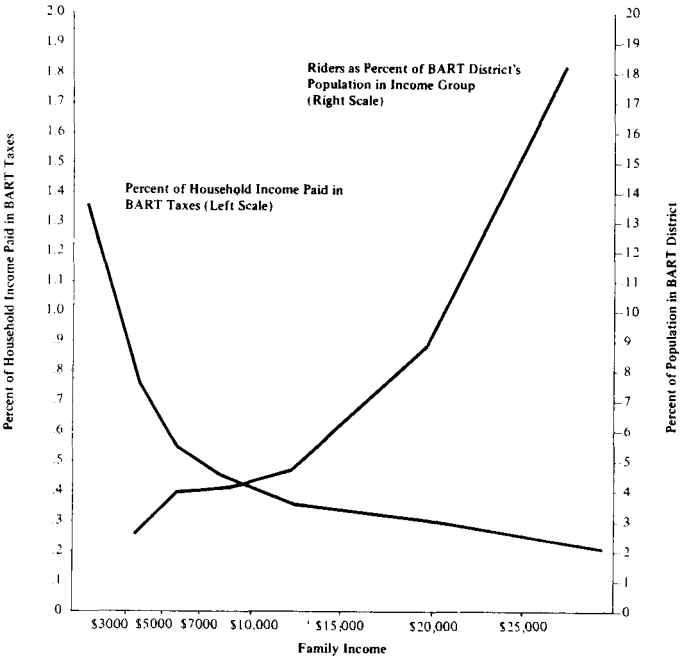
Income Comparison of BART Taxpayers and BART Riders


Riders as Percent of BART District's Population in Income Group (Right Scale)
Percent of Household Income Paid in BART Taxes (Left Scale)
Percent of Household Income Paid in BART Taxes
Percent of Population in BART District
$3000 $5000 $7000 $10,000 $15,000 $20,000 $25,000
Family Income

Comparative costs

Every trip calls for three kinds of expenditures. There are the dollar costs that auto owners and transit agencies pay for vehicles, fuel, roadways, drivers' salaries, interest charges, insurance, and so on. There are the time expenditures made by travelers, who seem to make sensitive assessments of the lengths of time they must spend riding vehicles, getting to and from vehicles, and especially transferring and waiting for the next vehicles to arrive. The third kinds of costs are external to the transportation systems: annoyances borne by neighbors who must suffer noise, pollution, congestion, and other nuisances that transportation systems and their patrons impose.

To compare the costs of alternative travel modes, one must tot up the monetary outlays, the time expenditures, and the social costs associated with each mode, preferably on standardized scales and in common coinage. This is obviously difficult to do, if only because each mode of travel provides somewhat different qualities of service and because some costs and some benefits are not directly traded in pecuniary terms. But it is not impossible to do.

A group of economists at Berkeley, led by Professors Theodore

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Keeler and Leonard Merewitz and Dr. Peter Fisher, recently completed a careful study aimed at comparing the full costs of standardized trips on BART, local buses, and private cars.[4] Their findings indicate that *the bus is consistently more cost-efficient than even a subcompact automobile, at virtually all levels of traffic density and at current averages of 1.5 persons per car.* No surprise there. But they also find that the bus is consistently cheaper than BART for comparable qualities of service, whichever set of technical assumptions is built into their estimating formulas. *Moreover, and to everyone's surprise, their findings show that a subcompact automobile is also cheaper than BART, except when travel densities approach 20,000 passengers per hour within a single traffic corridor.*

BART's maximum design capacity on the transbay and West Bay lines is 28,800 seated passengers per hour (72 passengers per car, 10-car trains spaced at 90-second intervals). So far BART has not approached that level of patronage. In Wolfgang Homburger's October 1975 survey, BART's maximum single-hour transbay load was 8,120 eastbound passengers at the height of the evening peak period. Instead of 28,800 passengers *per hour* in each direction, BART's transbay patronage was only *28,500 per day.*

Philip Viton has computed the full costs of carrying one passenger on a representative trip by BART, bus, and auto. He concluded that *even when BART achieves its full design efficiency, it will still run on all its lines at higher costs per passenger trip than buses, and its costs may continue to be more than those of an automobile even then.*

The estimates are based on assumptions most favorable to rapid transit. They assume a hypothetically optimized system in which schedules of buses and trains minimize riders' waiting time and agencies' operating costs. Estimates for automobiles include governmental costs of building, maintaining, and policing highways, individuals' total costs of buying and operating private cars, and the external costs of pollution. For each mode, a concerted effort has been made to account for all monetary and non-monetary costs borne by governments, travelers, and neighbors.

The dollar-equivalent costs are estimated against a set of variables related to interest rates on investments, value of travelers' time while riding, value of their time while getting to a train or bus, and the average lengths of trips. BART trip-cost estimates are highly sensitive to variations in interest rates, because of the large capital investment; and they compare best against bus and

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car when computed for long-distance trips. As we shall see, because very few Bay Area commuters live within an easy walk of a BART station, BART trip-cost estimates are particularly sensitive to assumptions about the value of the access time.

There is some disagreement among economists on the dollar values to be assigned to passengers' time, but all agree that some dollar equivalents must be included in estimating total costs. After all, BART did go to great expense to offer high speeds, presumably because its designers believed that passengers value their time, preferring a brief trip to an extended one. Similarly bus operators work for short headways and for on-schedule performance because they believe that passengers' dollar-clocks click fastest when they are waiting for a bus to come. (If those beliefs were in error, the appropriate response would be to slow down the trains and to delay the buses. Obviously those strategies would be absurd.) The consensus among students of "modal choice" is that average passengers clock their walking-and-waiting time about three times more heavily than their riding time.

In an effort to avoid any inferences of negative bias, the estimates presented here have been deliberately biased in favor of BART. Throughout, wherever the estimating equations permit a choice of values, we have selected the combination of permissible variations to show BART trip-costs at their lowest levels when compared with the bus and the car.

The comparisons in Table IV present the full costs of carrying a hypothetical commuter 15.7 miles across the Bay from Orinda to San Francisco's Montgomery Street in the morning peak hour. We assume that he lives two miles from the BART station, which he reaches by a local feeder bus, and that he walks a quarter-mile from the Montgomery Street station to his office. Alternatively in

TABLE IV. *Full Costs of Peak-Hour Trip from Orinda to Montgomery Street*[1]

Number of Passengers in Peak Hour	Auto		Bus	BART plus Feeder Bus
	Standard	Subcompact		
1,000	$4.49	$4.05	$8.51	$34.08
5,000	4.49	4.05	3.72	9.20
8,000[2]	*4.49*	*4.05*	*3.21*	*6.77*
10,000	4.49	4.05	2.99	5.99
20,000	4.49	4.05	2.59	4.26
30,000	4.49	4.05	2.44	3.64

[1] In 1972 dollars. These are low estimates, computed to be most favorable to BART. Costs to agency plus time costs to riders plus social costs to neighbors.
[2] Current peak volume on both bus and BART.

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our example, he could ride a bus from near his home to the Montgomery Street BART station, or he could drive his car and park in a public garage near his office.

Actual peak-hour volumes on the transbay routes for both bus and BART are only about 8,000 passengers per hour. At that volume, a bus ride costs $3.21 and a BART ride costs $6.77, with private cars in between. We have also computed estimates under less favorable, but nevertheless reasonable, assumptions concerning the value of commuters' time and the rate of interest on capital invested. For that same ride from Orinda to Montgomery Street at present peak-hour patronage, full costs would then be $5.83 on the bus and $11.96 on BART.

When BART has been finally debugged and operates at full schedule and full efficiency, with a fully seasoned patronage, it will surely be carrying more riders; and so both average and marginal costs will then fall. The most favorable estimate for seasoned operation on that same commuter trip from Orinda to Montgomery Street is unlikely to fall below $6.00, however. (The less favorable, but still reasonable estimate is $10.00 for that trip.) In contrast, the full cost of a nearly equivalent ride on a bus would be between $3.00 and $5.00, and the cost of driving a standard sedan would be between $4.50 and $7.50, all costs included. Under those circumstances, BART is unlikely ever to replace other modes of travel, so long as travelers are permitted free choice. Perhaps only under regulated market conditions, imposing mandatory constraints on use of buses and cars, might BART carry the volumes of passengers that were forecasted for it.

The financial picture

All estimates above are economic costs—i.e., they reflect costs to the economy, representing the opportunity costs of using resources for these purposes rather than some others.

Alternatively, we might examine accountant costs—i.e., the costs as they might be seen by BART's internal bookkeepers. That picture is somewhat different. Annualizing BART's total capital costs to find its annual "mortgage payments" at its favorable 4.14 per cent interest rate, adding in its current operating costs, then dividing by annual passengers carried, the cost per trip comes to be about $4.48. With fares averaging around 72¢, the average subsidy then comes to about $3.76 per ride.

Two major factors are of interest here to officials in other cities.

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TABLE V. *BART's Annual Expense and Patronage Account (Fiscal Year 1975-76)*

ITEM	AMOUNT
Annualized Capital Costs	$ 82,400,000
Annual Operating Cost	64,000,000
Total Cost for Year	$146,400,000
Number of Trips during Year	32,700,000
Average Cost per Trip	$4.48

First, direct costs to the BART district are high because the system was financed largely from local sources. With federal subsidies now available, no other metropolitan area will finance a transit expansion on its own again. Second, BART's capital-intensive plant makes it inherently expensive. Subways and elevated, exclusive, grade-separated rights-of-way cost a lot, no matter how crudely or elegantly they are constructed. Besides, BART spent a great deal of money in pioneering research and development for new systems, the benefits of which will now accrue to other cities that build subsequently. But BART had one advantage over all other descendent systems. It was built with pre-inflation dollars. However exorbitant its costs may seem, they appear cheap relative to comparable systems under construction in Washington and Atlanta.

Rail-transit systems are inherently capital-intensive. When they are also burdened with very high labor costs, as BART is, operating expenses may become excessive. BART's operating costs are running at about 15.7¢ per passenger mile, while the local bus system is costing about 13.6¢. Despite the all-out effort to reduce manpower requirements by automating train operations and assigning only one attendant per train, BART now finds itself with a wage bill only slightly less than that of the local bus system—10.5¢ per passenger mile compared to about 13.2¢ for the bus. In part because of a federal requirement that led to a costly union contract and in part because of the high-priced engineering and planning staff it maintains, BART has not yet shown how to cut the labor and operating costs that have been hurting public transit systems of late.

As a result, it has been in a virtually continuous financial crisis. Governments can continue to "throw more money at it," but the real solution is for BART to attract sufficient patronage at least to carry its operating costs, as planned. The question, then, is why haven't Bay Area travelers been flocking to this outstanding transportation system.

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What went wrong?

BART was designed to be a superior way for Bay Area commuters to get to work. Its promoters believed that if only superb transit service were offered, commuters would gladly give up their private cars. Because commuters are not responding as expected, it is important that we understand why.

The clue may lie in the few, but key design decisions that were made in the early stages of BART planning and that then fixed the system's essential character. It now appears in retrospect that those design features preordained BART's failure to lure the motorist.

At the time BART's designs were being drawn, the postwar auto boom was a major factor in metropolitan growth, and freeways were accorded high priority. At the same time, public transit systems were falling into disrepair or being abandoned, and patronage was declining everywhere, projecting the prospect of a virtually all-auto transportation system. BART was seen as a lower-cost alternative to freeways and as a means for both reversing the trend and preserving the option of public transit. The design strategy was to top the automobile by producing a transit system that would incorporate and improve upon the automobile's most attractive features, thus making the transit system more than competitive.

The designers concluded that high speed, high comfort, high style, and downtown delivery were the attributes that matter most to motorists; and BART was then designed to outdo the car on those four counts. BART's management has delivered the system promised in its original specifications. Unfortunately, however, these may not be the features that will entice mass patronage.

The emphasis on high speed between stops and on comfort and overall aesthetic excellence quickly led to the decision to build a rail system, and that in turn led to a logically necessary network of decisions concerning equipment design, electronic control gear, roadbed standards, station qualities, and the like. As Randall Pozdena has insightfully noted, each of these decisions was simultaneously a decision to trade off other potentially desired qualities. Some of the more important sacrifices and compromises he identifies are in Table VI on the next page.

Of course every design for a complex system must make these sorts of trade-offs, for it is seldom possible to enjoy all advantages simultaneously. It is the tragedy of the BART story, however, that the chosen attributes compelled the sacrifice of features that were essential for attracting riders. Most important by far are the first

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four in the table. By choosing mainline rail, the designers created a system geometry that puts BART out of walking distance of most residents.

TABLE VI. *Design Trade-offs and Compromises*

SELECTED QUALITIES	SACRIFICED OR COMPROMISED QUALITIES
1. High average speed between stations, therefore widely spaced stations.	1. Closely spaced stations, therefore ease of access to stations.
2. Mainline system serving major traffic corridors.	2. Network of transit lines serving sub-areas of the region. Ability to complete trip in a single vehicle without having to transfer to and from feeder system.
3. Batch-type transport mode: cars in trains carrying many passengers.	3. Flow-type transport mode: smaller vehicles carrying comparable numbers of passengers at shorter headways, with branching local distribution at origin and destination.
4. Fixed rail on exclusive grade-separated right-of-way.	4. Flexible routing in response to changing travel patterns. Economy of construction. Right-of-way usable by other vehicles. Disabled vehicles do not disrupt operation of entire line.
5. Limited number of access points into system, to encourage clustered urban development.	5. Compatibility with footloose trends and low-density settlement patterns.
6. Frequent service with stops at all stations.	6. Differentiated service with both "local" and "express" operations.
7. High aesthetic and comfort standards.	7. Economy of construction.
8. Regional long-haul design.	8. Local trip-making capability.

The designers seem to have been most concerned with the attractiveness of the BART system as seen by passengers after they arrive at the station. Station decor is handsome; waiting time for trains was to have averaged a brief 45 seconds; 80-miles-per-hour speeds make for short elapsed time en route; and the station at the other end of the trip is also aesthetically pleasing. But outside BART's premises, the passengers are on their own. They must find their way to the station by bus, car, or foot, make the transfer, and then find their way at the other end after leaving the BART station. While

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they are BART's guests they are treated very well; outside the premises they are rather neglected.

Oddly enough, although the designers have always been explicit about the critical role of bus access to the system, the planning process was rather nonchalant about creating it. There was little effective planning for feeder-bus service until the period just preceding opening day, and it is still quite inadequate in the outlying suburbs.

Making the wrong choices

During the past 15 years, at least a dozen major studies have investigated the ways travelers assess costs when deciding how they will make intrametropolitan trips. With remarkably small variation among the cities examined, the studies all conclude that *the time spent inside vehicles is judged to be far less onerous than the time spent walking, waiting, and transferring, by a factor of up to 3 or 4 times. For commuters waiting on platforms, the factor may be as high as 10 times!*

BART designers were obviously unaware of these findings; the research was conducted after the key BART decisions were made. Indeed, their own understanding was just the opposite, as this key conclusion of the 1956 basic design report indicates:

> . . . interurban rapid transit must be conceived as providing only *arterial* or *trunk-line* connections between the major urban concentrations of the region. . . . We are convinced that the interurban traveler, facing the choice between using his private automobile or using mass transportation, will be influenced in his choice more by the speed and frequency of interurban transit service than by the distance he must travel in his own car or by local transit to reach the nearest rapid transit station.[5]

Herein may lie a clue as to why their strategy erred. Their fixation on high speed meant that riders spend relatively short amounts of time in BART's vehicles, but this is the kind of time that travelers place a low cost upon. That fixation has also inevitably meant long access times, which travelers account as a high cost. The desire for high speed led to wide spacing between stations, and that, combined with the skeletal mainline-route pattern, compels most travelers to use some kind of feeder service getting from home to BART. The use of a feeder bus compounds the onus of waiting and transferring, and many potential BART patrons have therefore simply decided to ride the bus all the way through to their destinations,

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instead of making the transfer. Many others have simply decided to continue driving their cars. The reasons for both decisions should now be clear.

Buses and cars mixed into the traffic stream operate at slower speeds than 80-mile-per-hour trains, of course. However, trains must stop at each station every 2.5 miles or so. Meanwhile buses and cars on freeways usually move along nonstop until they reach the terminal or exit. The net effect is that *scheduled running times for some East Bay peak-hour express buses to San Francisco are just about the same as for BART trains.* Of course, whenever an accident or a breakdown clogs the freeway, traffic slows down or stops; but BART's frequent breakdowns almost even the score. Overall, where express bus service is available, the advantages of no-transfer rides and steady freeway movement make the bus competitive in route time.

The major competitive advantage of buses, however, derives from the savings they permit in access time. Buses have the capacity to thread into residential districts, collecting passengers near their homes. Automobiles do even better than that, parked in the owner's garage and available at his call. Whatever the cost of traffic congestion, access time is zero. However unpleasant the bus may be, access time is low. In these respects, the bus and the car are functional opposites of BART; they trade off high speeds en route in in favor of easy access.

It seems that BART's mistake was made at the outset, when the wrong technology was chosen. Instead of lavishing primary attention on in-vehicle travel time and physical amenities, which called for a mainline rail system on an exclusive grade-separated right-of-way, the designers would have attracted more riders by adopting more automobile-like technology. A system that could pick up passengers within a short walk of their homes and deliver them, in the same vehicle, to within a short walk of their jobs would have been far more likely to entice them out of private cars. The success of both the new Golden Gate buses from Marin County to San Francisco and the express buses from the East Bay suggest that high-quality bus service can attract significant numbers of commuters.

It is the door-to-door, no-wait, no-transfer features of the automobile that, by eliminating access time, make private cars so attractive to commuters—not its top speed. BART offers just the opposite set of features to the commuting motorist, sacrificing just those ones he values most. This was a fundamental mistake. Given

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commuters' propensities to weight system access and waiting time so heavily and to place much less importance on in-vehicle time, it is scarcely any wonder that BART has not lured them away.

Moreover, the error is compounded by the high construction and operating costs compelled by the insistence upon high speed. That initial standard in turn determined much of the overall and detailed designs: a new and separated guideway, automatic controls, unconventionally wide-gauge rails, a highly stable roadbed, lightweight cars of unprecedented design, a highly specialized and high-priced work force, and so on. If its stations were more closely spaced, if its routes were more extensive, if it were not so difficult to get to it, BART's patronage would certainly be far higher. The paradox is that potential passengers are not using it because it is too rapid.

Was it worth it?

Having spent $1.6 billion to avert the trend to the auto-highway system, BART is now serving a mere two per cent of all trips made within the three-county district, and about five per cent of peak-hour trips. Some 50,000 of its daily passengers have been diverted from inexpensive buses to expensive trains, 46,000 from private cars and car pools, and several thousand more from the latent pool of trips not previously made. The overall effect has been to leave highway congestion levels just about where they would have been anyway. BART may have been influential in propagating downtown building construction, but it has not yet had any visible effect on suburban development.

The most notable fact about BART is that it is extraordinarily costly. It has turned out to be far more expensive than anyone expected, and far more costly than is usually understood. High capital costs (about 150 per cent of forecast) plus high operating costs (about 475 per cent of forecast) are being compounded by low patronage (50 per cent of forecast) to make for average costs per ride that are twice as high as the bus and 50 per cent greater than a standard American car. With fares producing only about a third of the agency's out-of-pocket costs, riders are getting a greater transportation bargain than even bus and auto subsidies offer; and yet only half the expected numbers are riding. The comparative full costs of a typical transbay peak-hour commuter trip on BART are about $6.80, on a bus $3.25 and in a small car $4.00 —computing all those estimates with variables that make BART

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appear most competitive. The total economic costs of even a large-sized American car are still lower than BART's for a transbay commuter trip—all-day parking charges, highway construction, pollution, and all other measurable costs included.

The 50,000 passengers BART has diverted from buses could be carried in brand new luxury buses at a total capital investment of under $13 million. The BART system cost $1,600 million. The costs of buying a whole fleet of new buses sufficient to carry all BART's passengers projected to 1980 would be under $40 million, or about half of one year's worth of BART's annual mortgage payment alone. One is compelled to ask, was it worth it? Was it wise to have built so costly a system?

Rather than reverting to pre-auto technology, the designers might instead have sought a competitor to the automobile that, by incorporating similar service capabilities, might then be more likely to induce commuters to switch. Among currently available alternatives are express buses that collect passengers near their homes, or subscription buses that pick them up at their doors, then use urban freeways to speed them to job centers; jitneys and group taxis, the major transit modes in many parts of the world, which use automobiles as public transit vehicles, interlacing residential districts and delivering directly to employment places; and franchised van pools that operate as a quasi-bus and quasi-car pool, providing door-to-door service at both ends of commuters' trips, albeit with some rigidity in scheduling.

These are automobile-like modes that more nearly approximate the door-to-door, no-transfer, flexible-routing features of the private car than do 10-car trains on fixed mainline rails. Although they all surely lack the high technological glamour of BART-like systems, they can approximate BART's in-route speeds; they can greatly reduce system-access time; and furthermore, as Professor McFadden's surveys in the Bay Area indicate, where time and money costs are equal, most travelers seem not to be taken by the glamour of BART over the bus anyway. In any case, with the ratio of capital costs between BART and buses on the order of 40 to one, and with operating costs per passenger-mile essentially the same, it would seem that investment prudence is therefore on the side of the express bus.

Experience with express bus service is still rather sparse, however; and so we can have no assurance that the high levels of transit patronage that BART was aiming for are attainable with buses either. Although we do now know that express buses work, we do

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not know whether they work well enough. Much more experimentation with various sorts of auto-like and bus-like modes is called for, including experiments with pricing schemes that charge motorists and transit riders the full costs of travel.

There are surely many who still believe that BART will eventually make it—that only start-up problems, overly publicized equipment failures, and annoying delays dissuaded potential patrons. Given enough time, they believe, BART's trains will run on time and will then become the powerful magnets capable of attracting motorists at last. Given the uncertainties that bedevil this business, they might of course be right; only the test of time can tell. But even if BART were today carrying all 258,500 daily passengers originally projected for 1975, at present average fares it would be earning only $46,000,000 per year, or less than three-fourths of its *present* operating costs.

The power of promotion

If BART has achieved any sort of unquestionable success, it is as a public relations enterprise. BART has projected a superb image from the start: a high-speed, futuristic transport mode that would transport commuters in luxurious comfort without economic pain. It became one of the more effective signs of the Bay Area's avant-garde spirit, the very symbol of Progress.

As a result, it may be that BART's most successful effects have been felt outside the Bay Area. Urbanists and civic officials throughout the world have become intimately familiar with its promises. Many, in turn, have been encouraged to propose various sorts of modern rail systems for their own cities, some of them aided by the same consultants who mothered BART through its Bay Area gestation. Despite its problems, BART has both popularized and legitimized modern rail transit, and that much-reproduced photograph of the BART lead car has become a heraldic symbol on rail-promotion banners everywhere.

Back home in the Bay Area, the picture is rather more gloomy. Half the expected riders have chosen the convenience of their private cars or the local bus that also runs them close to their jobs. Real estate developers seem to believe that auto access is more important for their potential customers or tenants, and so they have pretty much ignored the locational opportunities BART stations opened to them. People quietly pay property and sales taxes, unable to do anything much about the BART levies, whether they

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like them or not, whether they benefit from them or not. Governmental officials, caught with a large investment, outstanding bonds, and rapidly rising operating costs, keep priming BART with the hope that it will eventually run on its own. According to one careful student of BART's finances, they would find it more cost-effective to abandon the train service and convert the rights-of-way into exclusive bus lanes instead. It is unlikely that any public officials will find that politically acceptable, however, especially when BART is still so new. Besides, public officials seem to be constitutionally incapable of admitting error.

The whole affair again raises some persistent questions about the analytical and ideological bases underlying local political decisions, about the locus of accountability, and about governmental capacity for learning. From the beginning, BART's planners were handicapped, because the state of transport-choice theory was so inadequate that it was impossible to simulate accurately what would happen if BART were built. They did not even have adequate descriptive data showing how people choose among travel modes, especially travelers having choices among three such first-rate systems as are now offered in the Bay Area. It was therefore virtually impossible to forecast patronage or revenues with any precision. The science of transport planning has simply been inadequate to warrant the level of confidence that has accompanied this project. However cautious the disclaimers that were attached to the forecasts, once in print the numbers somehow became reified, then accepted as facts by political leaders, voters, and bond buyers. One wonders to what degree ideological leanings affected personal beliefs when the forecasts were inherently so uncertain.

BART is the manifestation of a wide array of ideologies that must have made it attractive to a wide array of publics. It symbolizes the frontiers of science and technology and, simultaneously, the nostalgic old railways of the elder stateman's youth. It is the rationally efficient means for reducing land consumption, and it simultaneously reflects the romantic desire to capture the ethos of Parisian urban life. It is seen as sound business by both merchants and city officials, and as the instrument of sound development policy by city planners. It is the darling of the anti-auto, anti-technology ideologues and also of the engineers who admire its technological sophistication. Many people believed in BART for many reasons. The mere failure to meet its objectives is not likely to shake such faith, particularly when the appraisal is made in merely pecuniary terms.

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Many are wholly pleased with the BART system. It offers perhaps the smoothest and quietest ride in the world. The cars and stations are physically handsome and pleasant. Fares are low and travel speeds are high. Save for the initial equipment failures, it is almost exactly the physical system that was promised to the 1962 voters. For those who can use it conveniently, it is superb. For others, the very fact that it was built is itself an achievement, for BART was surely one of the more spectacular civic projects, and the transbay tube one of the more daring engineering feats of our time. From those special perspectives, BART has been an unqualified success.

But the question remains whether leaders in other metropolitan areas can learn from BART's experience that these perspectives are illusory. Having been built in a metropolitan area offering what are probably the best test conditions in the country, BART is not passing the most important of those tests. It is struggling with persistent fiscal crises, with no prospect of ever becoming the self-supporting system the voters were promised. The poor continue to pay and the rich to ride, with no visible prospect that this will change. Its patronage remains low despite low fares and rising gasoline prices, and that situation seems to be stable too. Save for the possible influence on downtown San Francisco and Oakland, it has had few detectable effects on urban development patterns, and its effects on traffic congestion are similarly undetectable. Clearly, BART has not earned a passing grade on the significant tests. One wonders, then, what underlies the professional confidence of transit consultants, and what sorts of politics and ideologies in local and federal governments continue to promote BART-like systems elsewhere.

BART has been heralded as pacesetter for transit systems throughout the world. The evidence so far suggests that it may also become the first of a series of multi-billion-dollar mistakes scattered from one end of the continent to the other.

But in the long run, say in 50 years when the bonds will have been retired, when everyone will regard BART as just another built-in feature of the region, rather like Golden Gate Park, perhaps no one will question whether BART should have been either built or abandoned. It will then be regarded as a handy thing to have, a valuable facilitator of trips that would not otherwise be made by the elderly and the young, a blessing that enriches the quality of Bay Area life. And who will gainsay then the wisdom of having built a white elephant today?

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FOOTNOTES

This article is the result of a collective effort by the following contributors: Seymour Adler, George Cluff, Kevin Fong, E. Gareth Hoachlander, Wolfgang S. Homburger, Leonard A. Merewitz, Mary Jo Porter, Randall J. Pozdena, David Reinke, and Philip A. Viton. The review was undertaken at the suggestion of Wilfred Owen. It was supported by the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Henry Bain has been our most perceptive critic.

[1] The proposal was presented in Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Hall, and Macdonald, *Regional Rapid Transit*, Report to the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit Commission (January 1956).

[2] Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Tudor, Bechtel; Smith, Barney, and Company; Stone and Youngberg; and Van Beuren Stanbery; *The Composite Report, Bay Area Rapid Transit*, Reports submitted to the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (May 1962).

[3] E. Gareth Hoachlander, *Bay Area Rapid Transit: Who Pays and Who Benefits?* (Berkeley, University of California, Institute of Urban and Regional Development, 1976).

[4] Theodore E. Keeler, Leonard A. Merewitz, and Peter M.J. Fisher, *The Full Costs of Urban Transport*, three volumes (1975); Randall J. Pozdena, *A Methodology for Selecting Urban Transportation Projects* (1975); and Philip A. Viton, *Notes on the Costs of Mass Transit in the Bay Area* (Berkeley, University of California, Institute of Urban and Regional Development, 1976).

[5] Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Hall, and Macdonald, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

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Economics is not enough—notes on the anticapitalist spirit

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG

According to Friedrich von Hayek (and others), "it is meaningless to describe the manner in which the market distributes the good things of this world among particular people as just or unjust." He is quite right. Justice is as irrelevant to the functioning of the market, to economic efficiency, and to the science of economics, as it is to a computer or to the science of meteorology. But it is not irrelevant to our attitude toward these things. People will tolerate a social or economic system, however efficient, only if they perceive it as just. Even if everybody were better off in a market system than in any other, people might resent the resulting inequality of benefits sufficiently to become hostile to it. Only if that inequality could be morally justified would it appear to be acceptable—or if, as in former times, the market were accepted as a divine or natural creation that "it is meaningless to describe as just or unjust." But we no longer so regard the market. It has been secularized. The various moral justifications available in the past melted away when the traditional beliefs and customs on which they rested were eroded by the market forces themselves and the kind of free, secular society they created. No new moral justification has replaced the traditional ones: The market has not been able to come up with anything since the decline of the bour-

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geois ethos that linked economic reward and moral virtue. On the contrary, the rational temperament of the market destroys supportive social mythologies as an acid may eat away the material needed to contain and confine it.

The market does provide incentive rewards, but these are seldom felt to be distributed justly. Moral justice must indeed differ from market effects—unless the production of market value, economic merit, is defined as moral merit. This is what John Bates Clark did and what Ayn Rand does once more. Such an identification is convenient and, for a while, it was supported by tradition. But today, wealth is as often identified with personal vice as with personal virtue. Anyway, the identification confuses the *de facto* historical (if you please, natural) conditions of legal entitlement to rewards, or of actual appropriation, with the justification thereof: It identifies what is to be justified with its moral justification. Robert Nozick does so in a sophisticated way in his *Anarchy, State, and Utopia.* He takes as self-evident the answer to a question he barely asks: "Why is it just that each of us be the exclusive beneficiary of his own legitimate efforts?" It is his natural right, Nozick declares. To which the inevitable response is: But nature never told *me* that. Nor does Nozick explain why, if nature's will is what he says it is, we should follow it when we could do otherwise.

It seems to me that rights (as distinguished from claims) are granted by social authority, and it is for us to decide what they should be. Nature merely sets limits to the range of the possible within which we have to decide. Our decision must depend on justice as we see it, and on efficiency, rather than "nature." Even if a particular set of historical conditions were shown to be unavoidable, they would not therefore become just. But history, though never avoided, is never unavoidable.

Whatever independent definitions are chosen, "moral desert" certainly cannot be identified with "economic desert" as it is determined by the market. Hence, the morally and the economically justified distribution differ. An appealing movie actress, a shrewd promoter, a successful manager, or investor, or advertising man, or inventor, or oil discoverer, are not morally superior to a faithful nurse or worker, to a courageous lifesaver or war veteran, to a needy child, a great poet or philosopher. At least, I am not familiar with any ethical theory that holds them to be. Yet the former may earn much more than the latter, and for good enough *economic* reasons: What they offer has more market value. But they do not earn more because they are morally more deserving than those who are less well

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rewarded. (Interestingly enough, wealthy actresses are rarely resented, while wealthy bankers are—perhaps because the assets of actresses are more visible and appealing than those of bankers.)

Economics and inequality

Equality of opportunity—i.e., procedural justice—is of little help here. Unequal results may be achieved by people in reasonably similar circumstances competing in the procedurally most "just" manner. A lottery leads to unequal results; so does the most scrupulously fair competition. The results can still be felt to be unjust, even though the injustice is now attributed to "fate." Actually, equality of opportunity may intensify the resentment generated by the unequal results it produces.[1] For ultimately such feelings go back to envy of just those natural gifts and differences, including luck, that equality of opportunity highlights. The differences seem unjust—they do not reflect any felt or recognized moral differences.

It is difficult even to justify morally the unequal social results produced by altogether natural gifts. Why should an attractive girl, in addition to enjoying her natural beauty, also be able to use it to become rich? Why should the person whom nature disabled, in addition to suffering the pain inherent in the disability, also be poor? And can we not say equally well of mental gifts and disabilities what has been said of physical ones? The inclination as well as the ability to make successful efforts is not independent of inborn physical and psychological gifts and of environmental advantages and disadvantages. One must grant then that the moral aversion to the unequal results of the market system, or of any system ideally based on equality of opportunity, has something to commend it besides envy. (The Judaic and Christian ethic of the past proclaimed the injustice of the world, whether that world be characterized by equal or unequal opportunity. But this religious ethic did not attribute that injustice to the government, and it proclaimed that all unjust inequalities would be compensated for in another world.)

Although its distributional inequalities may lack moral justification, the market system is likely to lead to superior economic results for everyone, because the market is so efficient that even if

[1] It does not always, as the attitude of sports fans testifies. Psychological exploration of the feelings generated by equality of opportunity and unequal results is urgently needed. Meanwhile, while lip service is paid to equality of opportunity, objections to the unequal results produced are usually rationalized by suggesting that the unequal results *ipso facto* prove that opportunity was not equal.

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only a small percentage of the national income is redistributed, more is available for redistribution to those disadvantaged by nature or misfortune than in alternative systems. Far more than any other system, the market through competition fosters technical innovation and provides for the replacement of obsolete products and modes of production. This, perhaps more than anything else, makes market systems productive. Central planning, by contrast, inhibits the introduction of the new and the replacement of the obsolete—which helps account for its relatively low productivity. Not least, the market makes an exceptionally wide dispersal of power and prestige possible, as well as very extensive individual independence.

Quite apart from their lower efficiency and the consequent aggravation of the burden of inequality, alternatives to the market, once actualized, are likely to arouse no less hostility than the market does. For any such alternative—e.g., centralized planning—runs up against the actual sources of a hostility which in the end may turn out to be directed toward all rational systems of distributing rewards rather than to any specific system of production or distribution. Popular feeling would surely be as opposed to an unequal distribution according to political deserts as it is now to an unequal distribution according to economic deserts.

An equal distribution, were it possible, would surely be rejected too: It would not appropriately reward unequal merits and efforts. We would not be satisfied if the indolent worker were to get as much as the hard worker, the careless fool as much as a careful and intelligent craftsman. Equal treatment of unequals cannot be just, as Aristotle pointed out. Merits differ. Moreover, so do capacities to enjoy things or to feel miserable. Hence equality in the distribution of income is as unsatisfactory to the moral sense as inequality is. We all want *moral* desert to be rewarded. But there is no satisfactory measure of moral deserts; as each of us defines them, moral deserts are incommensurable. No system of equality or inequality will satisfy our sense of justice, for neither rewards our own moral desert as each of us feels it ought to be rewarded.

However, it is precisely because they cannot identify moral and economic value that people wish to link them. For it outrages the sense of justice that, in the market, the services of persons perceived as morally less deserving can be valued more than the services of persons perceived as morally more deserving—although the very people outraged bring this result about by their willingness to pay more for the economically more valuable services. After all, that is why those who render such services get more, regardless of moral

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desert. But people also want to change this result to reflect their sense of justice, at least to some degree.

The uneasy and unstable relation between economic and moral valuation exists within people, not merely within social systems. It used to be a function of religion to stabilize this relationship by promising eternal rewards and punishments to offset temporal injustice. But the modern world, as created by capitalism, is secular in its basic modes of thought, and does not take religious faith seriously enough to assuage its moral discomfort.

The resentment of intellectuals

If resources are to be allocated to produce the total output valued most highly by allocators (in a free market by consumers), and if production is to be maximized, then inequalities of income, status, and power are unavoidable. Work must be rewarded by income, and the income earned by each worker must depend on how much work he does, on his skill, and on the value placed on it. Ability, skill, the inclination and the opportunity to work differ, as does the economic value of the work done and, therefore, the reward. Market value depends on scarcity, on how much is available relative to demand. Scarcities differ; therefore, so do the incomes earned for performing services. Thus the socioeconomic structure—the distribution of inequalities—always arises independently of any moral criteria that might be used to judge it.

Rewards must be distributed according to the market value of services for the sake of efficiency, if not justice. Critics who have conflated moral objections to the market's lack of justice with objections to its efficiency in calling forth production are simply wrong. A look at the alternatives to the market is altogether persuasive; they are less efficient by far. And it is easy to see that the socialist systems instituted to aim directly at justice so far have not been notable for achieving any more of it than market systems; and they grant less individual freedom. But such rational knowledge is of little help in dispelling the resentment against the market, or the longing for a system in which a just government justly rewards moral merits.

This longing is nonrational: Each of us secretly hopes that his essential superiority will be recognized. In fantasy, albeit unconsciously, revolutionaries as well as reformers place this hope on a utopian government, a true *parens patriae*, a just and omniscient parent—just as a gambler places his hope on Dame Fortuna, who

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inexplicably but certainly and justly will love him best, and prefer him, as mother should have done.

Intellectuals resent the market because it makes people pay only for economic value. Moral value is left out in the cold—and so are intellectuals, for they are the producers of moral value, of moral approval and disapproval for public consumption. Lately, quite a few intellectuals produce moral values that have market value too. But the main contingent of humanists and social scientists, the traditional intellectuals, still feel deprived of the power and income they believe they deserve by virtue of their virtue.

Hence intellectuals have often designed wishful utopias, generated by reason and desire, though bereft of reality or even possibility. They would reward morally valuable activities—their own kind of activities—rather than economic ones. However, in any actual social system, rewards for moral excellence are not likely to be prominent; and they are even less likely to be so in non-market systems than in market systems. If the economic decision mechanisms of the market are abolished, they must be replaced by political (governmental) mechanisms for distribution. Just as the market rewards economic services, political distribution systems will reward political services—i.e., services in the production and distribution of power. Actual distribution will necessarily depend on political power and be as independent of moral desert as it is in the market. We will be stuck with a system of distribution felt to be as morally irrelevant and arbitrary as that of the market, but that certainly leaves us poorer because it provides more incentives for unproductive political activities than for productive economic services.

Further, the government can distribute income independently of a market only by depriving individuals, or groups (such as corporations) of the right to produce and sell what buyers are willing to pay for. This is indeed what full-fledged socialism does. What is to be produced depends upon the decisions of government planners; production, therefore, is more likely to serve their purposes than those of any or all individual consumers. Unable to choose what to produce or sell, at what price, we would lose one freedom. To keep us bereft of it, the government would eventually have to deprive us of political freedom as well; as the sole producer and employer, it would find that easy to do. Shorn of institutional defense, individual liberty could not survive long.

However, there is little doubt that alternatives to the market system would increase the relative power and income, if not the freedom, of intellectuals and para-intellectuals—of bureaucrats and of

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clerks. After all, they would be in charge. The alternative to the market is bureaucracy, whatever label is affixed to it. At present, it only limits the market, but in a planned economy bureaucracy would replace the market by making decisions concerning allocation and production. In the end the power, income, and prestige taken from entrepreneurs would go to bureaucrats.

Many genuine intellectuals—specialists in the invention, development, and analysis of ideas—believe that their merits will be recognized so that they will occupy the positions in the bureaucracy that would enable them to benefit from this redistribution. Experience suggests otherwise. Major power positions are likely to be taken not by genuine intellectuals, but by specialists in the manipulation of bureaucratic power. They are no more likely to be intellectuals than bureaucrats are now.

The authority of tradition

While capitalist countries live in the greatest prosperity the world has ever seen, the supporters of their economic system are an embattled minority, certainly among the intellectuals, but also among other groups. Perennial moral vulnerabilities do not explain why the complaints against the injustice of the market system have such wide appeal now. We must turn to historical changes to account for the decline in the level of approval.

The religious emphasis of the past was on divine sanction for traditional or deserved inequalities. In the world beyond, they would be redistributed according to true moral desert—but also greatly magnified. (What inequality can possibly exceed that between heaven and hell?) Religion did not equate moral with economic merit, but neither did it object to economic rewards for economic merits, holding that moral merit need not be rewarded in this world. Thus limits were set to envy and to the clamor for equality or moral justice in this world, for moral justice was to come in the next. Religion opposed no particular economic system but, indiscriminately, any emphasis on material advancement. Psychologically (though not logically) this amounted to support for almost any *status quo*.

With the Renaissance and the Reformation, many religious thinkers came to believe that economic success might be a sign of divine approval. To strive for it thus became more legitimate. But when they bent their gaze from the heavens to this earth, men came to expect rewards here and now for their efforts and merits. They

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became altogether disenchanted with religion, once they no longer regarded the life to come as the goal of life on earth. Expecting to be rewarded justly here and now, men wanted to be rewarded more and more equally than they had been. Religion has since picked up the cue: Where it tries to regain influence, the ecclesiastical establishment does so by fanning the popular hostility to capitalism, by insisting on justice in this world and by de-emphasizing the next. Churches now try to gratify the longing for moral justice by advocating inchoate welfare measures rather than pointing to heaven.

Even without religious sanction, the legitimacy of inequality was not seriously questioned as long as tradition itself could still confer legitimacy. But the market economy destroys traditional beliefs and attachments and replaces them with rationality; it suggests a belief in the infinite perfectibility of man. The market does not believe it makes sense for anyone to do anything simply because his father or grandfather did it. Capitalism believes in progress, not piety.

Further, the inherent mobility of the market incessantly redistributes inequalities, so that they cannot be legitimized by tradition, which requires continuity. To be sure, alternative systems also lack tradition as a source of legitimacy, but they have defenses which capitalism lacks. They are apprehended as transitional stages to ultimate justice and equality, while the market economy is too rational and has existed too long now to be accepted as a preface to the millennium. So far, the socialist promise has survived non-redemption, just as major religions have survived the postponement of salvation *ad kalendas graecas.*

The dilemma of poverty

If to be poor still meant to have less than what one physically needs to survive, poverty would touch only a few among the poor in the United States (though not elsewhere). However, once biological needs are met for most of the poor, poverty is defined by history and society, and refers not to physical needs nor to the size of incomes, high or low, but to the social judgment passed on income differences. Thus, in the United States, adults whose income is less than half of the median are judged to be poor, regardless of the absolute size of their income. Yet, the traditional notion of poverty, involving hunger, destitution, and distress, still shapes our attitude to it, still evokes the horror it always did. After all, that notion was quite realistic for millennia and is still all too real in much of the world.

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Because of the dread associated with poverty, we would like to see it abolished. Yet, although many battles have been won, and more can be, the "war against poverty" cannot be won, since poverty has come to mean inequality, not plain misery. Anything but a totally equal distribution of income necessarily puts some people at the top and others at the bottom. Just as the top group will be called rich, the bottom group will be called poor. However much the size of the bottom group is decreased, or its distance from the others diminished (and that is where battles have been won), the remaining distance will not be perceived as insignificant: Those at the bottom continue to be regarded as poor by themselves and others, just as those at the top likewise continue to be perceived as rich.

Now, contrary to the hopes of reformers (and to the fears of revolutionaries), the lessening of the distance between the poor and others, and the decrease in the number of the poor, have actually added to the resentment of the poor.[2] The smaller and fewer that social distances become, the more intolerable they seem. Improvements often generate expectations of further improvements that grow more rapidly than the improvements do, and finally exceed possibilities. (This is the major source of pressure for the expansion of government expenditures, and ultimately for the inflation governments find so hard to avoid.)

Reduction of inequalities shows that the remaining ones are not inevitable. Hence, all reductions short of full equality are felt to be inadequate. The habitual is regarded as inevitable and the inevitable is tolerated. But the inadequate, the unfulfilled promise, is always resented. Wherefore the resentment of the poor has increased; when acknowledged, or justified, it is seldom seen for what it is: the effect of diminished poverty. To see the one as the effect of the other seems paradoxical because it is so contrary to our expectations. Yet the paradox is within ourselves, not in the social reality. When rich and poor were as "two nations," the poor experienced and therefore envied one another more than the rich, who were socially too remote even for envy. No longer isolated by vast and apparently insurmountable distances in education and living conditions, the poor now share much of the common outlook—in particular, the consuming ambitions of the non-poor, brought home

[2] Cf. Freud's "Narcissism of Small Differences," or Tocqueville's many references to this experience. Note also that if income differences were to be wiped out, other more fundamental differences would loom large and would be resented instead.

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day in and day out by television. Yet they still lack the means to fulfill these ambitions, and they resent what they have learned to perceive as "deprivation."

Indeed, the social perception of poverty has changed altogether. No one, rich or poor, believes any longer that poverty is part of a divinely sanctioned, efficient, or even tolerable social order—let alone the individual responsibility or fault of the poor. More than merely a sign of systemic inefficiency, poverty is seen now as an injustice, an unmet responsibility of the rich, who are guilty of depriving the poor. This notion now prevails among, as well as within, nations. No longer accepted as part of the *physiology* of the body social, poverty has come to be treated as social *pathology*. The pathology is usually regarded as inherent in the private ownership of capital, which is thought to cause exploitation and deprivation. Thus, the poverty of the poor is blamed on the wealth of the rich, and on the market system that makes both possible.

As long as they were a majority, or at least a plurality, the poor themselves accepted their condition as natural. So did everybody else. But the poor have become a minority, and rather than separate and different, they feel isolated and passed by. Thus rich and poor feel uncomfortable with the market, or "capitalism," even though or because it distributes the good things of life far less unequally than any other system ever did; even though or because it produces far more of them. For wealth now produces guilt feelings as often as comfort. The rich seldom feel that their wealth is deserved or just, and their children almost never do. The approval of God, nature, and society has been withdrawn. The market system stands naked to its enemies, vulnerable to resentment and guilt feelings.

While some things can be done to assuage guilt feelings—albeit with questionable success—very little can be done to reduce resentment. Redistributions short of total equality are not likely to reduce it. Poverty would not disappear if the "needs" of the poor were met by making "essentials" available to all, regardless of ability or effort. For, unlike survival minima, "needs" are not biologically given but socially generated desires. As more things become available through higher incomes, more things are felt to be essential to meet the needs created by these things. Biologically dispensable things become "essentials" when they are perceived as essential—whether they be new kinds of food, housing, television sets, cigarettes, legal and medical services, recreation, or plumbing. As Shakespeare realized long before 96 per cent of families on welfare had television sets, "... our basest beggars/ Are in the poorest things

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superfluous." The poor feel no fewer "needs" now than people who earn average incomes. Hence their needs cannot be met while they are poor—i.e., as long as they do not have average incomes.

Further, as welfare payments make the poverty of the unemployed or unemployable poor less depriving and punishing, some otherwise employable poor people become unable or unwilling to take employment at market rates. Employability is easily reduced, without fakery, by child bearing, drug addiction, sickness, or selectivity. One is unconsciously likely to make oneself unemployable when the price paid for unemployability makes it attractive. Once poverty becomes a marketable service, its supply rises as the price it brings does, relative to other services, such as work. Thus, either welfare grants must be kept within narrow limits so that the poor live quite differently from the non-poor and the production of poverty becomes unattractive to all those capable of producing other marketable services, or reduced employability—i.e., more poverty—must be accepted. We seem to feel too guilty to do the first, while the second leads into the quagmire in which we now find ourselves. Whatever can be said morally for present welfare payments, they are self-defeating economically and psychologically. Recipients feel no less poor, nor less resentful than they would without subsidies, and their number tends to increase as we buy the poverty that they produce, and thereby create a demand for it. In turn, guilt feelings increase as the number of welfare recipients does.

The resentments of the disadvantaged ultimately are directed against the market system, which generates inequality. Actually, so does any other system. But the market becomes the target for those living in it while other systems are idealized. The utopian grass of remote societies, or fantasies, always grows greener.[3]

God once willed apparent injustice, and faith justified it. He was "justly secret—and secretly just" (St. Augustine). Now only the social system is left to blame. And no system can survive in the end if it is perceived as unjust by both those who feel disadvantaged by it and those who benefit from it.

Children and socialism

Why are the young now so much more hostile to the market than the young were in the past? Up to the 20th century, in the upper

[3] Goethe's Mephisto was deceptive in saying that "all theory is gray and green life's golden tree." Fantasy (whether or not called theory) is greener than life ever can be, for it can be colored by desire alone.

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classes children were thought of as heirs. Raised to preserve and secure the status and fortune of the family, they were trained, educated, and above all disciplined accordingly. Ambitions and expectations were directed to the assumption of their role. Deviations were regarded with horror. Nineteenth century novels, French, German, or English, amply illustrate this, such as Verdi's *La Traviata*, or Dumas's *La Dame aux Camélias*.

Before the 19th century, family status, secured legally, was somewhat less dependent on the incumbent's conduct and, therefore, on his training. By the 19th century the aristocratic estate system was replaced by the bourgeois class system. Training and education became essential if status was to be preserved. Upper-class parents, particularly fathers, had the disciplinary means to impose education and to define the role of their children, because the child's own status, income, and future career depended almost entirely on the fortune and connections of the family. The threat of disinheritance was quite effective in keeping children in line.

In the upper classes children were thought of as investment goods, and fathers were able to ensure a proper return on pain of disinheritance. In the lower classes, children were also investment goods, but in a different way: They were current revenue producers. They also provided social security in old age. In both classes, then, parents had a strong interest in regulating the conduct of their offspring—and the power to do so.

This situation has radically changed. Children are no longer expected to preserve, secure, or produce anything for their parents. They have become consumption goods, to be enjoyed for their own sake, like pets. Wherefore, they are treated like pets: No serious demands are made of them. Parents want to be loved more than respected or obeyed; they leave the children free to "find themselves" rather than transmit external social demands to them. No expectations are entertained that children will continue family fortunes or have their conduct regulated by the parental will once they reach the age of reason. Anyway, the disciplinary means available to parents have become extremely weak. The threat of disinheritance is nearly meaningless; taxes greatly diminish what can be left; and ironically, children have the ability to earn reasonable incomes independently. Only one family in a thousand derives any significant income from inheritance now. (The proportion of families benefiting from inheritance may not have been greater in the past. But in the past these were the only wealthy families.) With very few exceptions the advancement, status, and economic success of the child

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in an affluent capitalist society do not—or, at least, need not—depend any longer on parental inheritance or connections.

As parental authority declined, it became a problem for children and sociologists. It was to be rebelled against in any way available. The rebellion has succeeded fairly well, and the ability of the older generations to transmit the culture and the discipline of the past has been weakened. Many young people who find it unsatisfying to rebel against parental authority—it is no fun to fight pudding—rebel against reality itself (e.g., by drug addiction) or, at least, against social discipline. The market is demonstrably less than just: what better target for hostility? Thus the young, if they do not want to destroy the market altogether, want to do good, to make amends for its injustices. They are not taught that producing what people value—as demonstrated by their willingness to pay for it—is to do good. They perceive production for the market as evil, for the motive is not altruistic, and the effects are tainted by the motive.

In all major social systems the motivation for work is to extend one's control over goods and services. This motivation—called greed or acquisitiveness when disliked—does not appear to be more widespread or intensive in a market system than in any other developed economy. Thus, socialist economies, as do capitalist ones, reward performance—political more than economic performance, however—with income, power, and prestige. Promotion under socialism means more of any of these, as it does under capitalism. There is no reason to think that the motivation of people is different in the Soviet Union than in the United States. But a socialist economy may have a psychological advantage. Increases in income and promotion in status are, as it were, officially regarded as morally deserved—just as, for instance, promotion from assistant to associate professor at Harvard. This relieves acquisitiveness and ambition of their selfish aura.

In the market, high incomes are achieved rather than bestowed from above. One achieves them by performing the services that are demanded. But there is no blessing by authority. Indeed, we have always been somewhat ambivalent toward our own greed. Perhaps we can't stand it in the naked, unadorned form that confronts us in the market economy—without the blessing of authority that absolves us of guilt. "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest," Adam Smith wrote. Reliance on "their own interest" makes the market work so well. It is also what makes the children as hostile to capitalist society as they are to "selfishness."

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Socialism has still another psychological advantage. It offers a visible hand in the form of central planning, instead of the invisible one of the market. The psychological advantage of visibility is great: It reassures people. The market is automated. Unlike visible manual controls, automatic mechanisms—whether markets or a natural order functioning by itself, not planned or presided over by a God—seem morally unintelligible and psychologically desolate, precisely because it is "meaningless to describe [them] as just or unjust."

The absence of a visible and tangible directive authority, when confused with an absence of direction, as it usually is, also leads to the accusation that the market exemplifies "anarchy of production." Yet the "invisible hand" of profit and loss directs the market to respond to consumer demands far more sensitively than any central planning authority would be able to do—if it wanted to. It does not; the point of planning is to impose the official planner's plans, by defeating the plans of consumers when inconsistent with those of the central planners. Multiple individual plans automatically coordinated are simply not perceived as "planning," whereas a central plan is. Individuals, each pursuing his own purposes, form a crowd on Fifth Avenue and are not perceived as belonging to a planned, organized whole, whereas a military formation is.

Ex oriente lux?

Nearly a hundred years ago August Bebel said that "anti-semitism is the socialism of the middle class." It was a correct insight into the psychological function of both ideologies. However, there is a reversal now: For the intellectuals at least, socialism takes the place of anti-semitism. As anti-semitism once told the middle class, socialism now tells the intellectuals where evil comes from and how it must be abolished. As the "anti-semitism of the middle class," hostility to the market is likely to be as impervious to rational information as ideologies that gratify emotional needs usually are. It is only from experience that people may learn that the abolition of markets will actually intensify their grievances. Perhaps the communist segment of the world will provide the educational experience needed to keep the free market elsewhere.

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The courts and desegregated housing: the meaning (if any) of the Gautreaux case

IRVING WELFELD

IN what has been termed a landmark case, the Supreme Court ruled in *Hills vs. Gautreaux* that when the federal government has been guilty of racially discriminatory practices with regard to the siting of city public-housing projects, it can be ordered to adopt a housing assistance plan that ignores municipal boundaries. With this decision, the Court has moved into an area where politicians fear to tread; to many, its action seems imperial and intemperate. Perhaps so—but I would like to suggest that the real problem is that the decision will surely be ineffectual, that the Court *cannot* act constructively in this area. To see why, it is important to understand the background of the case.

A good place to start is with what the National Commission on Urban Problems (the Douglas Commission) designated as a "landmark in the evolution of housing policy in this nation"—the Housing Act of 1949. In the Congressional deliberations over the Act, an amendment was proposed that would have mandated that public housing be operated on a non-discriminatory basis. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 46 to 32.

Surprisingly, the decisive votes for the defeat of the proposal came from Senators whose careers are associated with the fight

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for civil rights—Paul Douglas, Hubert Humphrey, Wayne Morse. Paradoxically, they voted this way because they saw public housing in the North as a vehicle for racial integration.

The amendment (which reflected the spirit and intent of the Democratic and Republican platforms in 1948) was proposed by Republican Senators John Bricker and Harry Cain in order to break asunder the bloc of Northern and Southern supporters of public housing. The Senators from the South were more than willing to accept public housing on a "segregated but equal" basis. As Senator Russell Long of Louisiana stated:

> [A] large number of excellent housing facilities have been constructed exclusively for Negroes . . . many of the Negroes are very well pleased . . . and . . . the Negroes do not have to mix with the white people. . . .

If the Northern Congressmen insisted on integrated housing, the amendment would pass but the bill would be lost. They were faced with the same dilemma that HUD would later confront in Chicago during the 1950's and 1960's. They would have to choose between segregated housing or no housing at all.

Little (or too much) guidance about this matter was provided by the civil-rights groups. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People backed the amendment, along with the two representatives from Northern Manhattan, Vito Marcantonio and Adam Clayton Powell, who proposed the amendment in the House of Representatives. Against the amendment stood the National Council of Negro Women and the Chicago *Defender*, one of the largest Negro newspapers in the country. The position of reformers who opposed the amendment was summed up by Charles Abrams in an article in the New York *Post:* "If the device [the Bricker-Cain amendment] succeeds it will become the forerunner of a whole series of efforts to use the civil-rights issue as an instrument for killing off civil reform. . . . The maneuver is made not to advance equality but to destroy public housing."

Senator Glen Taylor directly addressed the Negro leaders who supported the amendment:

> I have been approached by Negroes who said, "We would rather go down fighting here and now and not have any housing, than to compromise in this fashion." However . . . I believe those Negroes who spoke to me have houses, probably adequate houses, to live in. . . . We cannot be too self-righteous and be ready to let other people go without housing in order that we may stand by our principles.

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In truth, the issue was not perceived so starkly by Senator Douglas and his colleagues. A vote against the amendment did not force all public housing into a segregated mold. The choice between segregated housing and no housing was a Southern choice. In the North, public housing would offer both good housing and integration. As Senator Douglas stated:

> If it related only to the city of Chicago, I should vote for the Bricker amendment, to be applied to local housing projects in the city of Chicago. . . . the increase in public housing in the North will decrease the total amount of segregation which now exists. . . . The trend in the North is away from segregation, and while we have all varieties of practices in the housing authorities, we are moving away from it there. . . .

Senator Douglas held out the prospect that increased interracial contact would increase racial harmony. Various studies by social scientists in the 1940's lent support to that hypothesis. Striking differences in white attitudes towards blacks were found between residents of integrated and segregated public-housing projects. Randomly selected women in integrated projects held their black neighbors in greater esteem and viewed interracial housing with considerably more favor than did their randomly selected "sisters" in segregated housing.

Alas, Senator Douglas was wrong. The social science he relied on was oversimplified and he had not as yet mastered the intricacies of the legislation. Thomas Pettigrew, a social scientist who has been a leader in the struggle for school and housing integration, has written:

> Many well-meaning Americans have expressed the opinion that if only blacks and whites could experience more contact with each other, the nation's racial difficulties would solve themselves. Unfortunately, the case is not so simple. . . . More interracial contact can lead either to greater prejudice and rejection or to greater respect, depending on the situation in which it occurs. . . . Prejudice is lessened when the two groups 1) possess equal status, 2) seek common goals, 3) are cooperatively dependent on each other, and 4) interact with the positive support of authorities, laws, or custom.

The public-housing program, as it was altered to meet the political requirements of 1949, was not able to satisfy these criteria. To assuage the complaints of those who felt that public housing was interfering unduly with private enterprise and those who felt it was not reaching the really underprivileged, the public-housing program was redirected. Aid was channeled *to the very poor*—by

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lowering income limits, by barring discrimination against welfare recipients, and by giving priority to those displaced by urban renewal and highway construction.

The social cost of these changes was steep. The issue of public housing became a focus of confrontation and conflict—not so much within the projects as among the public at large. The hopes of happy relations between black and white tenants within the walls of public housing were dashed by opposition from neighbors *outside* the proposed walls. For the changes in the legislation had created two nations in the realm of housing. Hard-working taxpayers seeking to preserve their savings, their homes, their neighborhoods, and their ethnic culture now perceived the prospective tenants of public housing in their neighborhoods as belonging to that section of the poor called the "underclass"—welfare recipients who would bring with them turmoil, social disorganization, crime, dirt, and alien ways. At the neighborhood level, public housing was seen not as a noble effort toward a new society but as a threat to cherished values.

Good intentions are not enough

Chicago's housing needs were urgent in the 1950's and 1960's. Mrs. Gautreaux and her family of six were living in a one-bedroom apartment. Another plaintiff shared a two-room apartment with his wife, three children, and a pack of rats. The Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) wanted to rehouse these people—but where? On this matter, the Chicago city council had its own strong views. In *Politics, Planning, and the Public Interest*, Martin Meyerson and Edward Banfield quoted the opinion of Alderman Duffy, a representative of Senator Douglas' constituents. Duffy's views were also representative of most of Chicago's aldermen in the early 1950's:

> Public housing should not be placed where it will stymie the growth of a community. . . . To put a public housing project in a vast tract . . . and then expect private contractors to go in there is just asinine. Wherever there is a project there is deterioration of the surrounding neighborhood. No one will invest in a $15,000 or a $18,000 house near one of those projects. . . . At 115th and Ashland they wanted to put up four-, five-, and six-story buildings in a strictly single-family residential neighborhood. . . . But they didn't tell the people there that not one soul [in the neighborhood] would be eligible to live in those places. They didn't tell them that they were going to bring slum-dwellers in there. They were going to use that fine tract of land for outsiders when we ourselves were in sore need of housing.

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If the CHA was to build its housing, it would need city council approval. It paid the price: The aldermen were given an informal veto over projects proposed for their wards. The CHA, like Congress, opted for good housing in segregated neighborhoods over bad housing in segregated neighborhoods. The result was that 99.5 per cent of the proposed units in white areas were rejected. Practically all the projects were built in black neighborhoods.

In order to retain some public housing for poor whites, the CHA designated four older (pre-1944) projects that had been built in white areas as suitable for whites only. Despite the fact that 90 per cent of the waiting list was black, the CHA kept the percentage of blacks in these projects at a minimum. Thus as of July 1968, the CHA was operating 60 projects containing 29,000 units that were 99.5 per cent black, and four projects containing 1,700 units that were 95 per cent white.

In the ensuing legal controversy, honorable intentions were not accepted as a defense by the Court, and CHA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) were found guilty of violating the equal-protection clause of the Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in operating a public-housing program that segregated blacks. Oddly enough, the Court did not speak much about the poor whites. But if the site-selection and tenant-selection process segregated blacks *de jure,* it excluded whites *de facto.* Very few public-housing projects could be built in white neighborhoods, and very few poor whites were willing to move into black slums in order to get an apartment. Twice as many poor whites live in Chicago as poor blacks. Nevertheless, the ratio of black to white in public housing is better than 20 to one. As of 1973, in the 3,000 *family* units added to the inventory of CHA housing since 1960, exactly one was inhabited by a white family.

In the lap of the courts

When good intentions go awry, the results usually land in the lap of the judiciary. The original court order, by Judge Austin in 1969, was ambitious. The CHA was to use its best efforts to build housing that was integrated. The new housing was to be built in predominantly white areas and to be unobtrusive. More specifically, Chicago was divided into "limited" and "general" areas. The "limited" area consisted of census tracts with a population that was either more than 30 per cent non-white or within a mile from

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the outer perimeter of such census tracts. The "general" area was the remainder of the city, 75 of Chicago's 200 square miles. Construction of new public housing for non-elderly families was barred from the predominantly black "limited" areas until 1,500 new units were built in "general" areas. Thereafter, at least 75 per cent of the new units had to be in the "general" areas. In addition, 75 per cent of all units that were to be leased by CHA from private owners were to be in "general" areas.

The units were to be in small projects. The maximum size project was ordinarily to contain no more than 120 *persons* and the public housing units could not exceed 15 per cent of the total housing units in the area. To assure integration of the new projects, given a waiting list that was 90 per cent black, the CHA could make up to 50 per cent of the units available to neighborhood residents, who were—in the "general" areas—mostly white.

The order was not followed by swift action by the CHA. In 1970, when informed that the CHA was waiting until after the spring 1971 mayoral elections to present a list of sites for city council approval, Judge Austin established a timetable. What followed was litigation and appeals until after the election. In May 1971, the loss of the appeals and pressure from HUD (which had just been found guilty of discrimination in the case) resulted in a timetable for submission of sites to and action by the council. When the city fell behind in its timetable, Judge Austin ordered the withholding of Model City funds until the sites were approved. But the Circuit Court of Appeals, seeing no reason to punish the innocent, overturned the District Court's action in 1972. Judge Austin replied by ruling inoperative the Illinois law that required city council approval before land could be purchased by the CHA. But by this time, the plaintiffs were ready with a new strategy, which led to the Supreme Court's *Gautreaux* decision.

The plodding inertia of CHA can be read as evidence of the wickedness of Chicago's city fathers. As much was said by former Supreme Court Justice Tom C. Clark who, sitting with the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, wrote in 1974 that the reaction of the governmental agencies displayed a "callousness towards the rights of the black underprivileged citizens of Chicago that is beyond comprehension." A more charitable view, however, can be taken. After all, what was involved was integrating people not merely of different races, but of widely varying socioeconomic status. In truth, the CHA was being asked to achieve a level of

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racial, economic, and sociocultural integration that had never been achieved in this country—or even on this continent. Gruen, Gruen, and Associates, in a study entitled *Directions For the Suburbs* (which was prepared for the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission in April 1971 as part of an effort that ultimately produced a plan for the location of subsidized low-income and moderate-income housing in the suburbs of Dayton, Ohio), searched the country for examples of such integrated residential areas. They were unable to find *a single one* that would have met the criteria of the judicial decree.[1]

A Social Science Panel of the National Academy of Sciences, in a report for HUD in April 1972 entitled *Freedom of Choice in Housing: Opportunities and Constraints,* concluded:

> There is no evidence from field studies that socioeconomic mixing is feasible. The trend in the movements of urban population is towards increasing separation of socioeconomic categories. The tendency is manifested among blacks as well as whites.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the finding of sites for 1,500 units within the court's ground rules for size and racial mixture was not an easy task. Even if all of the sites previously rejected by the city council could be retrieved—sites for 10,903 units—few would pass muster under the new rules. Over 90 per cent of those units were now in "limited" (primarily black) areas. To further complicate matters, just when all the appeals were finished, HUD instituted a moratorium on new public housing in the beginning of 1973. By the time the case reached the Supreme Court at the end of 1975, a grand total of 63 units (i.e., apartments) had been completed, and poor Mrs. Gautreaux had died.

The case reached the Supreme Court because of a shift in strategy by the plaintiffs. Despairing of the progress being made in the case, and armed with a study that indicated that by the year 2000 all of Chicago would be within the "limited" area, the plaintiffs pressed for a metropolitan plan. Judge Austin turned down the request, since the suburban entities had never been in the case and such an order would enable "the principal offender,

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[1] The success of the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) in mixed-income housing was cited by Nathan Glazer in his article "On 'Opening Up the Suburbs'" (*The Public Interest,* Fall 1974). However, in addition to the possibility of careful tenant selection mentioned by Glazer, at least two other factors should be noted. First, *all* the tenants are subsidized. Second, a social audit financed by MHFA found that "the pattern of racial distribution in MHFA developments is only moderately different from that of the general housing market."

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CHA, to avoid the politically distasteful task before it by passing off its problem to the suburbs." The Circuit Court, hearing the *Gautreaux* case for the fourth time, overruled the District Court. It felt that a metropolitan plan was absolutely necessary.

HUD appealed the decision on the basis that the Circuit Court had gone too far. In *Bradley vs. Milliken*, a school desegregation case, the Supreme Court had overruled a metropolitan busing plan for Detroit that involved the crossing of the boundary lines between the Detroit school district and suburban school districts. HUD contended that the *Milliken* decision precluded an order affecting its conduct beyond the city limits.

The Supreme Court unanimously informed HUD that it had misunderstood the *Milliken* decision. HUD was correct that, in the absence of evidence of discrimination by the communities surrounding Chicago, or of a "significant segregative effect" within these communities, equitable relief would not be granted against these suburban communities. In the absence of a constitutional violation, federal courts would not restructure the operation of local and state governmental entities. HUD was wrong, however, in failing to realize that its position was not like that of the suburban school districts in Detroit. HUD had violated the Constitution and the effect of that was to confine families eligible for public housing to one segment of the housing market area—a market area that encompassed not merely the city of Chicago, but the metropolis of Chicago.

Finding an appropriate, equitable remedy posed a dilemma. On the one side, the wrong was metropolitan in scope. On the other side, the remedy should not interfere with local governments that had not been implicated in HUD's unconstitutional conduct. The Court would have painted itself into a corner had there been only the public-housing program to work with, since it does require the active involvement and cooperation of the locality. The main reason that the suburbs do not operate discriminatory public-housing programs is that, in the main, they don't operate public-housing programs. The federal statute requires a local determination of need, the approval of each contract by the local governing body, the execution of a cooperative agreement, and, most important, financial outlays to make up the difference between the small tax revenues generated by such public housing and the expenditures for education and other municipal services.

The previous passage of the Section 8 program in 1974, however, permitted the Court to resolve the problem with a stroke

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of the pen. In the Section 8 leasing program, HUD can contract directly with private owners to make leased housing units available to eligible lower-income persons. The participation of local housing authorities and the approval of local governments are no longer constraints. The local government is permitted to comment on a proposal, but HUD need not heed the comment. So with a flick of its Bic, the Court remanded the case to Judge Austin.

Can the courts achieve equity?

If the Supreme Court had consulted with Congress concerning the suitability of using HUD and Section 8 to implement desegregation, it might have had second thoughts. Within a month of the decision, HUD's handling of Section 8 was blasted by both the Senate and House committees in charge of enacting HUD's legislative authority. They both stressed HUD's ineptness and unresponsiveness to Congressional policy directives—in particular, HUD's rechanneling of Section 8 authority "to 'bail out' existing FHA apartment projects which are facing financial insolvency." Without getting into the question of whether HUD was acting in the public interest, the fact remains that this diversion of a substantial portion of units to save FHA projects will diminish the resources available to remedy the Chicago situation.

The Supreme Court's noninterventionist pose vis-à-vis local governments raises the question of whether the latter will cooperate with the Court order. The Section 8 program does involve the combination of racial and socioeconomic integration; and although the incomes of those groups served are higher than in public housing, it is also true that the incomes of the suburbanites are higher than those in the "general" areas of Chicago. One can therefore expect many suburbs to have little interest in the program—to put it mildly. This puts the Court in the position of trying to draw the line between non-enthusiastic non-cooperation and actual discrimination. It is worth recalling that the absence of kindness can kill when it comes to the exercise of the police and taxing power. A literal interpretation of subdivision controls, a failure to extend a sewer or rezone, a high tax assessment, or strict enforcement of building and housing codes can kill an otherwise feasible project.

One can argue that the courts need not exercise leverage on the localities since they can push the major domino—HUD. In order to qualify for "community-development special revenue-sharing,"

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a locality must submit a housing-assistance plan for HUD's approval. HUD could use its power to shape the suburban localities' plans into the judicial mold. Of course, that assumes the localities wish to play. If the rule is "no housing-assistance plan, no federal largesse," a community (such as Cicero, Illinois) can stand pat and not take the money.

Even if HUD can get the localities to play the game, its power is limited as far as getting them to play in a certain way. The housing-assistance plan basically requires that a community assess the needs of lower-income persons residing in or expecting to reside in the locality and set forth realistic housing-assistance goals. If Chicago is at all typical, there are likely to be almost as many poor people in the suburbs as in the city. The 1970 Census counted 8.2 million poor people in the suburbs and 9.2 million in the cities. The Section 8 income limits go way above the poverty limits to 80 per cent of the median income. It is thus likely that, given the larger population of the suburbs—and Chicago's suburbs have 1.2 million more persons than the city—*the number of eligible residents within the suburban communities will be more than enough to fill any community's realistic allocation of subsidized units.* Moreover, the rules of the program permit the community to give a preference to present residents of the community and those who work there. A suburban locality will be able to find more than enough recruits among its blue-collar, white-collar, and retired residents without having to resort to Chicago's public-housing residents. Racial integration can also be obtained without resorting to city residents. A study of subsidized projects in suburban areas of Washington, D.C., discovered that approximately 80 per cent of the minority residents came from the suburbs.

Administrative and political insanity

The Supreme Court also overlooked the fact that something was lost in choosing private owners rather than local governments as HUD's partner in desegregation. A private landlord may not discriminate against minorities in renting—but it is a giant step from that to requiring a landlord to participate in the Section 8 program. There are many good reasons, ranging from low vacancy rates to high paperwork requirements, for not participating in the program. Even for the landlords who do participate, there is the question of who chooses the tenant. What owner of a suburban property will choose a one-parent welfare family as a tenant? And if HUD tries

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to take away the veto power from private owners—whose money is at risk—HUD will be without partners. Even in Sweden, when the city of Stockholm was given a right to build in the suburbs, the local jurisdictions were given a veto power over tenant selection.

Can the entire problem be avoided by having HUD act directly with the residents of public housing in Chicago? HUD could give tenants Section 8 certificates that would permit them, on their own, to rent apartment units throughout metropolitan Chicago. This seems on the surface to be an interesting possibility—but, in actuality, it points to a fundamental problem with the Section 8 program itself.

If public housing is to be desegregated, the "fair market rents" established under the Section 8 program must be high enough to enable tenants to rent throughout the metropolitan area. In Section 8, the participating tenant is usually subsidized to the extent of the difference between the rent of his apartment and 25 per cent of his income. And to prevent landlords from growing fat on the program by simply raising their rents, different "fair market rents" are generally set for new, recently completed, and existing units by apartment size and building type in each market area. The upshot is that low-income people find they cannot afford to rent in those neighborhoods "where," as Andrew Greeley has caustically commented, "judges live." They can only afford to rent in their own areas, or similar areas elsewhere—hence, no dispersion.

HUD is trying to cope with this problem by permitting different rent schedules for different communities in the same housing-market area. Area offices will be permitted to raise rents by up to 20 per cent above the "fair market rent" to make the program workable in higher-income jurisdictions within a metropolitan area. But this highlights the administrative absurdity and economic and political insanity of the situation.

As to administrative absurdity, in Chicago, the fair market rent for a new two-bedroom unit in an elevator apartment is approximately $500. The rent on a recently constructed unit (built within the last six years) is $375. The comparable "right" rent—as defined by HUD—for an older unit is approximately $250 in an elevator building and $225 in a non-elevator building. In a high-income suburb the respective rents might be $600, $450, $300, and $270. A family of four with a gross income of $5,400 would pay $100 if it chose any of these eight units. But if it found and decided to live in an existing non-elevator two-bedroom unit in the city that rented for $300, it would have to pay $175. The family would

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have committed the cardinal sin—it would have stepped outside the law's categorical boundaries. In spite of the fact that it may be saving the government $300 a month by living there rather than in a new, two-bedroom, elevator $600-a-month suburban apartment, it must pay an additional $75, since the rent exceeds the government-determined "right rent."

And as for economic and political insanity, so far HUD has been lucky, because its housing programs have reached but a tiny percentage of those who are eligible.[2] However, God forbid, if the program were expanded and Section 8 were made available to a substantial number of public-housing tenants, the entire housing-assistance system that has been elaborately constructed would collapse. There would be a mass desertion of all public-housing projects in favor of Section 8 rent certificates. (Why live in a housing project when you can now afford a semi-luxury apartment?) The costs of housing the poor would rise astronomically. And low-income families would now be eligible for better housing than is enjoyed by most Americans. It can't happen; it won't happen.

The necessity for thought

The *Gautreaux* decision then simply adds another burden to an already overburdened housing policy. Its consequences for racial integration are predictable—there won't be many. It will, however, have the certain result of making our public-housing program even more controversial and ineffectual than it has been.

This controversy and this ineffectuality arise from the reluctance of Congress—and, one suspects, all of us—to make clear but difficult choices. A housing program that aims simultaneously at increasing the stock of new housing and providing shelter for low-income families is a policy that tries to hit two targets with one arrow. It cannot be done; but Congress persists in the effort. Such new "good" housing for poor people is bound to be very expensive—and Congress will not vote the money; it also will provoke outcries from those non-poor who must continue to live in old, less than "good" housing—and Congress will always listen. Now, the Supreme Court insists that this housing program, which has not succeeded in either increasing the housing supply or housing

[2] An agreement between HUD and the plaintiffs will delay returning to the district court until at least the spring of 1977, pending a demonstration involving the granting of Section 8 certificates to *400 public housing households.*

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the poor, also achieve an unprecedented degree of racial and socioeconomic integration in residential areas. The luckless administrators of HUD will duly try—but they will end up tying themselves and our housing program into knots.

One of these days, Congress and the courts and the public may come to realize that just because a goal is desirable, it does not follow that the job can be done if the programs are ineffectual. Why the programs have been so ineffectual for so long, in spite of the presence in Washington—contrary to public opinion—of executives and legislators of good intelligence and intentions, is another story for another article.

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